

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1401545

HISTORY  
OF THE  
ARCHDIOCESE  
of ST. LOUIS

---

REV. JOHN ROTHENSTEINER

LIBRARY  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SCHOOL  
OF THEOLOGY  
817 West 34th Street  
Los Angeles 7, Calif.



Class BX 1617

Book 5256

Copyright N<sup>o</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

**COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.**



Theology Library  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AT CLAREMONT  
California



HISTORY OF THE  
ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS







+ *John J. Glennon*  
Archbishop of Saint Louis.

# HISTORY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

*In its Various Stages of Development  
from A. D. 1673 to A. D. 1928*

BX  
1417  
S2  
R6  
v.1

by

REV. JOHN <sup>Ernest</sup> ROTHENSTEINER  
*Archivist of the Catholic Historical Society  
of St. Louis*

---

VOLUME I

---

Containing Parts One and Two

ST. LOUIS, MO.

1928

NIHIL OBSTAT

H. HUSSMANN

*Censor librorum. Deputatus*

Sti. Ludovici, die 23. Novembris 1928.

IMPRIMATUR

✠ JOANNES J. GLENNON

*Archiepiscopus*

Sti. Ludovici, die 24. Novembris 1928.



---

Copyright 1928

*Rev. John Rothensteiner*

---

~~University of Southern California~~

©ClA 4255

PRESS OF  
BLACKWELL WIELANDY CO.  
St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A.

DEC 31 1928

Rel

282.778  
J.1

R846h

*To His Grace*

THE MOST REVEREND  
JOHN JOSEPH GLENNON, D. D.  
Archbishop of St. Louis

*In Memory of the*

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

OF HIS SUCCESSION

*to the*

ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

OCTOBER 13, 1903

*The Author*

333429

Transferred

Methodist World Service Fund

Religion







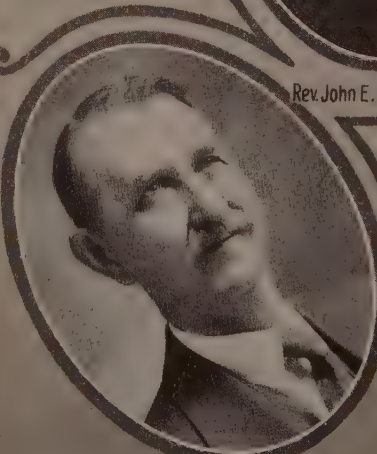
MSGR. F.G. Holweck, D.D.



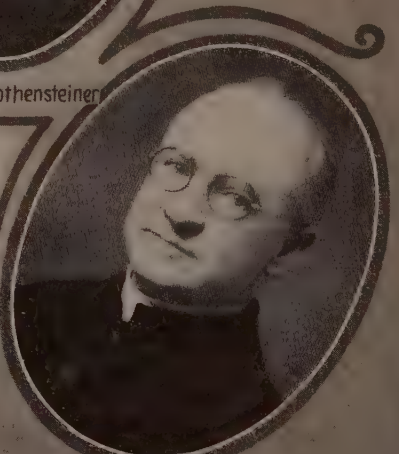
Very Rev. Charles L. Souvay C.M.D.D.



Rev. John E. Rothensteiner



Mr. Edward Brown



Rev. Gilbert J. Garraghan S.J.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

## PREFACE

Lovers and students of the past have frequently remarked with feelings of profound surprise and regret, that the great Archdiocese of St. Louis has no written history worthy of the name. The nearest approach to such a desideratum is found in the various chapters on New Orleans and St. Louis in John Gilmary Shea's *History of the Catholic Church in the United States*. But these chapters, being part of an extensive whole, and consequently restricted in scope, cannot fill the demand for a detailed history of the diocese.

It was long known that the Church in these parts has a history and a most interesting one, a history of heroic endeavor and sacrifice, of beautiful and saintly lives, a history of failures mingled with the successes, of temporary reverses and final triumph. For so glorious a present, as the Archdiocese offers today, with its noble Cathedral, its Seminary, its hundreds of Churches and Schools, its great University, its Colleges and Academies, its Hospitals, Orphanages, and other Institutions of Religion and Charity, and lastly its devoted army of priests and religious, presupposes a great and ever memorable past. For if the Catholic Church today lives and labors among us with all the youthful courage and hope, and with all the superior wisdom of age, she most assuredly owes it largely, under God, to her humble, loving and heroic founders, the bishops and priests of her early dawn. To recall to the memory of the present generation, and to transmit to future ages the record of the deeds and sufferings and sacrifices of these pioneers of the Church in the heart of the Mississippi Valley, is the purpose of these volumes.

The main credit for this undertaking belongs to His Grace, the present Archbishop of St. Louis, the Founder and chief Patron of the Catholic Historical Society of St. Louis. This Society was organized in 1917, for the purpose of collecting and preserving materials of all kind, "relating to the Catholic history of the Diocese of St. Louis and of whatever territories and places that were, at any time, associated with St. Louis in the same Ecclesiastical division, and of instituting, carrying on and fostering historical research on subjects pertaining to the field of inquiry above described, and disseminate such information."

In December, 1918, the first number of a quarterly publication was issued by the Society under the editorship the Rev. Dr. Charles L. Souvay, C.M. D.D. Dr. Souvay's associates in the so-called Committee

on Publication were the Rev. Fathers: F. G. Holweck, Gilbert J. Garaghan, S.J., John Rothensteiner, and Mr. Edward Brown. The five members of this Committee worked together in perfect harmony and mutual helpfulness. A number of informal meetings were held in which each one's newly-gained information was communicated to all. At stated times historical papers were read and discussed, rousing fresh interest in other members of the Society and even beyond.

Much useful and interesting material was found hidden away, like the golden nuggets in the quartz, in a mass of histories, biographies, books of travel, historical articles and occasional notes in Reviews and Magazines. Sometimes very pleasant surprises were met with in most unpromising places.

The richest source, however, of our diocesan history was found in the Archives of the Diocese of St. Louis and of the St. Louis University, and the Archives of Notre Dame. These manuscript sources superseded, to a great extent, the printed materials, offering an unprecedented mass of new facts and interpretations of old ones, vouched for by the very actors and eyewitnesses of what transpired.

For the earlier part of our history we found great help in the various volumes of the so-called *Jesuit Relations*, and of the Virginia and British Series of the *Illinois Historical Collections*. The annual publications of the Leopoldine Association of the Austrian Empire, and the *Annales de la propagation de la Foi* of Lyons, have also been put under contribution, and have yielded generous spoils, whilst private individuals and religious communities were equally generous, if not equally rich in their offerings. From many sources, therefore, came together the almost innumerable data that were to form the body of this History of the Diocese of St. Louis.

For a history of the Diocese of St. Louis in its fullest extent, was in contemplation from the start. The five volumes of the *St. Louis Catholic Historical Review*, the numerous articles published by members of the "Committee on Publication" in the *Catholic Historical Review*, of Washington D. C., the *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*, of Chicago and in the *Watchman and Church Progress* of St. Louis, as well as in the German *Pastoral-Blatt*, and the *Central-Blatt and Social Justice*, also of St. Louis, were but preparatory steps towards the much-desired achievement.

For a time it was considered advisable that the immense material be divided into four or five grand divisions, and that each member be intrusted with the work of sorting, and arranging one of them and presenting it in literary form. The consequent difference of style, and, perhaps, also of the historical point of view, in the various divisions of the work, however, was found objectionable. One man must write

the history, to secure unity of arrangement and a proper perspective of events.

According to the judgment of all, the Editor-in-chief of the *Review*, the Rev. Dr. Charles L. Souvay, C.M. was the man to give us the classical History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. He possessed, in an eminent degree, the penetrating mind and retentive memory, as well as the critical faculty and the graces of style, requisite in a true historian. But alas, Dr. Souvay was already overburdened with priestly, professional and literary work, and felt obliged to decline, whilst promising every aid to the one that should undertake the task. Next to Dr. Souvay, and equal to him in many particulars, was the Rev. Gilbert J. Garraghan, S.J. of St. Louis University. His beautiful books on *Chicago*, *Kansas City*, and *St. Ferdinand de Florissant*, and his articles of ripe scholarship in the Historical Reviews, seemed to point to Father Garraghan as the coming historian of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. But this hope, also, was destined to be nipped in the bud. Father Garraghan was commissioned by his Superiors to write the History of the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus, a work of tremendous proportions. Father Frederick G. Holweck was a man of many gifts and graces, a facile writer, possessed of a most remarkable store of information on almost every possible subject, and the gift of putting it into vivid, and often picturesque, form. His English was not always pure and idiomatic, but some mere stylist could have easily remedied these defects. Yet, a strange fatality seemed to stand in our way: Father Holweck was busily engaged with the composition of his two great works: *Biographical Dictionary of Saints* and the *Calendarium Liturgicum Festorum Dei et Dei Matris*. As a possible writer of the proposed Diocesan History, Father Holweck declared he was out of question. Mr. Edward Brown, though a writer of ability, served on our Committee as business manager and literary adviser, rather than as a practicing historian. The Committee had by May 1925, arrived at a choice, by way of elimination; the present writer was the only eligible member left. Either he must undertake the great and laborious work, or the whole undertaking must fail. There was no escape for me. I had no large literary work in view. I had parish work to do, a parochial school to manage and a new school-building to erect, and to raise the money for it. But other priests also had these things to do. I was approaching my sixty-sixth year, and my health was impaired though not yet broken. At last I yielded gracefully, as I thought, and promised to do my best: the Archbishop gave his approval and the assurance of his support. My friends of the Committee felt relieved and delighted. I might command whatever they had. There was to be no question as to mine and thine between us. The History of the Archdiocese was their sole object; as members

of the Committee on Publication they would do all they could to further the project.

The time when I received this urgent invitation from the Catholic Historical Society of St. Louis, I had but a faint idea of what was before me. I had, indeed, for a number of years, done research work in the history of the earliest period of Catholic endeavor in the Mississippi Valley. I had published a number of historical sketches and articles and Chronicles of my former Parish of St. Michaels, Fredericktown. But to attempt a work of such vast proportions, and requiring such diversified knowledge, as a history of the earliest and most comprehensive diocese of the West, had never entered my mind.

Three full years have passed since that day: many hundreds of days and nights of study and search and toil: a few months of serious illness intervened, during which the pen dropped from my hands. A tornado smashed almost every window in my Church. But the thought, now or never, animated the drooping spirit, and here, at last, is the work I was asked and almost forced to compose.

To the Most Reverend Archbishop of St. Louis, to Msgr. John J. Tannrath, Chancellor of the Archdiocese, to the members of the Committee on Publication, Rev. Dr. Charles L. Souvay, C.M., Father Gilbert J. Garraghan, S.J., the lamented Monsignor F. G. Holweck, and Mr. Edward Brown, I am so deeply indebted that I can truly say: what is good in the work is largely theirs; only the faults and shortcomings are altogether mine. Yet I have labored hard to marshal the thousand and ten thousand events and incidents, facts and dates, into an intelligible whole: *The History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis*. May it preserve the memory of those that have gone before, the heroic souls, as well as the lesser kind; and may it inspire the clergy and the people of today and the coming years with a strong resolve to do all they can to speed the day when the wandering sheep shall hear the Savior's voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.

Feast of St. John the Baptist 1928.

JOHN ROTHENSTEINER.

The Author's grateful acknowledgements are due, and herewith expressed to the following contributors of valuable materials towards this *History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis*:

To the Burrows Brothers Company for courteous permission to make copious extracts from their superb edition of the Jesuit Relations by Reuben Gold Thwaites.

To the Illinois State Historical Library of Springfield, Illinois.

To the Illinois Catholic Historical Society of Chicago.

- To His Grace, Most Rev. John J. Glennon, D.D. the Archbishop of St. Louis.
- To Msgr. John J. Tannrath, Chancellor of the Archdiocese of St. Louis.
- To Father Regnet, the Librarian of the St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.
- To the Jesuit Fathers Gilbert J. Garraghan, S.J., Lawrence J. Kenny, S.J., and Charles H. Metzger, S.J.
- To the Lazarist Fathers Charles L. Souvay, C.M., D.D., and Martin J. O'Malley, C.M.
- To The Franciscan Fathers of Washington, Missouri and P. Francis B. Steck, O.F.M. Ph.D., of Quincy, Illinois.
- To the Rt. Rev. and Rev. Fathers Msgr., Frederick G. Holweck, D.D., Charles Van Tourenhout, P.R., and William Walsh.
- To Rev. George Haukap.
- To Mr. John H. Geerling of St. Louis, Missouri.
- To Mrs. Ida Schaaf of St. Mary's, Missouri.
- To Miss Constance Smith of St. Louis and Mrs. Nettie H. Beauregard, Archivist; Miss Stella M. Drumm, Librarian of the Missouri Historical Society and Mr. William C. Breckenridge now deceased.
- To Rev. Henry Hussmann and Mr. Edward Brown, and Miss Mary Constance Smith for the great help in reading the proofs with me, compiling the index and other favors; and finally the many friends and well-wishers who filled out to the best of their ability, the questionnaire I sent them three years ago. May the good God reward all their kindness and good will.

In conclusion the Author would bless the memory of a former Chancellor, the Very Rev. Henry Van der Sanden, for the great solicitude with which he helped to gather, and preserve from waste so many of the precious memorials of our historic past.

Our heartfelt thanks to all.



## INTRODUCTION

History is the deliniation of a chosen period of human events in their natural sequence. Absolute devotion to truth is its very soul. Facts, not theories, are its necessary material. Fullness and exactitude of detail is, therefore, its first law. Opinions and guesses have no place in history: The statement of facts must rest on documentary evidence. The very words of the document are, as a rule, to be preferred, yet they should be used in the briefest possible form, so as not to interrupt the flow of the narrative. Where the line of demarcation lies between the two advantages sought, is not always easy to determine. In a work like this history, doing pioneer service in a wide field, the ipsissima verba of the actors themselves carry greater weight than the words of the historian merely giving the sense. Yet, a sequence of documents, no matter how important or interesting it be, is not history, but only a collection of material. To find the causal nexus between the isolated facts is the chief business of the historian. It is the "largeness of grasp," as Lord Roseberry called it, the orderly and vivifying grouping of the historical data into a true and intelligible presentation of the period under consideration, that marks the true historian. The imagination also has an important part in the writing of history. It bodies forth the images of men and scenes of the past and makes them live and move once more. But it must always follow the control of reason as reflected from the well-ascertained facts.

There is however, one great fact, easily ascertainable by historical methods, yet often ignored by so-called historians, the presence of God among men and His influence upon the course of events.

All history is the record of the world-wide battle between the spirit of light and the spirit of darkness, between the principle of good and the power of evil. For some mysterious reason God permits the machinations of his enemies and their seeming triumph. "But God still rules the world," as William Von Humboldt says, "and it is the purpose of history to discover these eternal mysterious decrees."

If this be true in regard to all history, it is certainly most clearly manifested in the history of the Church of God. Evil-minded or ignorant men attempt to destroy or, at least, to hamper her in her benign efforts: for a time they seem to succeed, but in the end they have to confess, even against their will, with the Apostate Julian: "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!"

The restless greed for gold and peltry opened the roads for the missionaries in their unselfish quest of souls. The horrors of the

French revolution drew multitudes of cultured and deeply religious men into the wilderness of Louisiana to become the founders, not only of cities, but of dioceses and religious institutions, in fact of a mighty province of God's Kingdom. The terrible famine in Ireland, and the religious, and political disturbances in Europe brought millions of intelligent and able-bodied men and women to the prairies and fruitful valleys of Illinois, Missouri, Iowa and Arkansas, as the first claimants of the virgin soil; and the over-weening pride of the instigators of the so-called Kultur-Kampf in the newly founded Empire of Germany compelled thousands of noble priests and religious to seek a new field of labor in a foreign land, which was to become dearer to them than the land of their birth. Misguided men in their pride of heart, and the destroying elements in league with them, rose in anger against God's mysterious purposes: but one by one they failed, and left us but another proof of God's interposition in the affairs of men, "reaching from end to end mightily and disposing all things sweetly."

Whilst then we endeavor to recognize the guiding hand of Divine Providence in all the changes of history, we are not disconcerted by the discovery of evil within the pale, nay in the very sanctuary of God's Church. A history must above all things be true; and as a non-Catholic historian justly says, "glozing of faults and apologizing for wrong deeds is not the part of an honest friend or of an honest man. The Church can afford to have the truth told even about herself." The sanctity of the Church remains untouched even by the failings and misdeeds of her children. Yet the Savior tells us: "By their fruits you shall know them." The Church has produced wonderful fruits in the wide fields of the diocese of St. Louis. Not only fruits of everlasting life in the inward beauty and holiness of countless souls, but also in the outward works, the cultural values of education, civic virtue and the arts, especially of architecture, sculpture and painting. It will be the historian's most pleasant task to trace the influences of the Church upon the Communities in which she has lived and labored for upwards of 250 years.

I say 250 years, although it is well known that the Diocese of St. Louis bears only one hundred years in its crown of glory. Yet the period of one and one-half century intervening between the foundation of the Mission of the Immaculate Conception of Kaskaskia and the erection of the diocese of St. Louis, with Joseph Rosati as its first bishop, was but a time of preparation for the coming greatness and power of St. Louis; and Kaskaskia itself, with its idyllic days and ways, appears as the *Alba Longa* of the future Rome of the West. In the first chapter of his *History of Rome*, Livy speaks of things that have happened "before the building of the City, or before its building was contemplated," of the foundation of Lavinium

by Aeneas, and of the foundation of the town of Alba Longa by his son Ascanius. Then he shows how the overflow population of these two places was diverted to the new city on the Tiber, compared with which both Alba Longa and Lavinium should appear insignificant. "Supererat multitudo Albanorum Latinorumque; qui omnes facile spem facerent parvam Albam, parvum Lavinium prae ea urbe, quae conderetur, fore." Whilst then, in point of time, our narrative will have to concern itself with the missionary efforts of the Jesuits, the Priests of the Foreign Missions, and the early Recollets, as a distinct part of the history of the Diocese of St. Louis, it will, in point of territorial extension, find itself taking in its purvue certain places and churches no longer associated with the present Archdiocese.

When the almost boundless Diocese of Louisiana, as it existed under Bishops Peñalver and Du Bourg was divided in 1826, and the city of St. Louis became an episcopal see under Bishop Joseph Rosati, the dividing line as against New Orleans was the southern border of Arkansas. The Diocese of St. Louis comprised all of Arkansas, Missouri and Iowa and the Indian Territory as far as the Rocky Mountains and even beyond. The western half of Illinois also came under the jurisdiction of the bishop of St. Louis, at first by delegation from the Bishop of Bardstown, Flaget, and eventually, by a Papal Decree. Even Chicago was for a time under the episcopal care of Bishop Rosati who, at the request of Bishop Bruté of Vincennes, sent Father Irenaeus Saint Cyr, across the prairies of Illinois to build and administer the first church in the future Great City of the Northwest.

In tracing the development of religious life in the Diocese of St. Louis it will, therefore, be necessary to take regard to the widely scattered missions of Bishop Rosati's Diocese, that have now become the twenty or more Archdioceses and dioceses of the States of Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota and beyond. New Orleans, however, must be left out of the count, because its territory was never under the rule of St. Louis.

Bishop Du Bourg, whilst residing in St. Louis for a time, and occasionally signing himself "Bishop of St. Louis," really held the title of "Bishop of Louisiana and the Floridas," with New Orleans as his appointed seat. The scope and subject matter of the History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, therefore, divides itself into three distinct, yet disproportionate parts:

## PART I. THE ERA OF PREPARATION.

Which embraces the events from Father Marquette's voyage to the erection of the Diocese of St. Louis under Bishop Joseph Rosati, 1673 to 1827, a little more than one hundred and fifty years. This Part I. is subdivided into three books:

BOOK 1. THE EARLY MISSIONS ON THE ILLINOIS AND MISSISSIPPI RIVERS.

BOOK 2. THE CHURCH OF ST. LOUIS IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD

BOOK 3. THE CHURCH OF ST. LOUIS UNDER BISHOP DU BOURG OF LOUISIANA.

## PART II. THE DIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS.

This embraces the events from the division of the diocese of Louisiana into the dioceses of St. Louis, and New Orleans, until the erection of St. Louis into an Archdiocese under Peter Richard Kenrick, 1827 to 1847, a period of only twenty years. It is subdivided into three rather unequal books:

BOOK 1. BISHOP JOSEPH ROSATI OF ST. LOUIS.

BOOK 2. BISHOP PETER RICHARD KENRICK, COADJUTOR TO BISHOP ROSATI.

BOOK 3. PETER RICHARD KENRICK, BISHOP OF ST. LOUIS.

## PART III. THE ARCH-DIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS.

This final part of the History, extending from 1847 to 1927, is likewise divided into three books:

BOOK 1. ARCHBISHOP PETER RICHARD KENRICK.

BOOK 2. ARCHBISHOP JOHN JOSEPH KAIN.

BOOK 3. ARCHBISHOP JOHN JOSEPH GLENNON.

The splendid administration of Archbishop Glennon is, as yet, too fresh in the memory of men and too sparsely documented to allow the proper perspective, required in scientific history. It will, no doubt, in some future work, form the crowning glory of a long series of beautiful developments of the Church in the Mississippi Valley. But for the present, a rapid description of what was accomplished, must suffice. In this regard we may say: *Si historiam requiris, circumspecte.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART I

### THE ERA OF PREPARATION

#### BOOK I

##### *The Early Missions*

	PAGE
CHAPTER 1. THE CROSS TRIUMPHANT AND THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS	1
" 2. FATHER JAMES MARQUETTE AND M. JOLIET.....	7
" 3. LA SALLE, DE TONTI AND THE RECOLLETS.....	19
" 4. ON THE ILLINOIS RIVER.....	27
" 5. THE GENTLEMEN OF THE SEMINARY OF QUEBEC.....	34
" 6. THE KASKASKIAS ON THE RIVER DES PERES.....	42
" 7. CAHOKIA AND THE SEMINARY PRIESTS.....	51
" 8. LAST DAYS OF GRAVIER AND MAREST.....	60
" 9. KASKASKIA AND ITS DEPENDENCIES—I.....	65
" 10. KASKASKIA AND ITS DEPENDENCIES—II.....	73
" 11. STE. GENEVIEVE AND ITS DEPENDENCIES.....	80
" 12. BANISHMENT OF THE JESUITS.....	86

#### BOOK II

##### *The Church in the Valley during the Transition Period*

CHAPTER 1. THE FOUNDING OF ST. LOUIS.....	99
" 2. CIVIL ALLEGIANCE AND ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY..	109
" 3. RETURN OF FATHER SEBASTIAN MEURIN.....	115
" 4. MEURIN AND GIBALT.....	124
" 5. FATHER GIBALT, THE PATRIOT PRIEST.....	132
" 6. ST. LOUIS AS A CANONICAL PARISH.....	140
" 7. FATHER BERNARD'S CONGREGATION.....	149
" 8. DISCORD IN CHURCH AND STATE.....	156

	PAGE
CHAPTER 9. RESULTS OF THE DISCORD.....	168
" 10. THE SULPICIAN IN THE ILLINOIS COUNTRY.....	184
" 11. VICAR-GENERAL JAMES MAXWELL.....	198
" 12. WANDERING WESTWARD.....	210
" 13. FATHER DUNAND AND HIS TRAPPIST BRETHREN.....	218
" 14. FATHER DUNAND THE LONE MISSIONARY.....	228

### BOOK III

#### *The Church of St. Louis under Bishop Du Bourg of Louisiana*

CHAPTER 1. BISHOP LOUIS WILLIAM VALENTIN DU BOURG.....	237
" 2. CHURCH GOVERNMENT BY MARGUILLIERS.....	247
" 3. BISHOP FLAGET'S INTEREST IN ST. LOUIS.....	251
" 4. BISHOP DU BOURG'S COMING TO ST. LOUIS.....	261
" 5. BISHOP DU BOURG'S DIFFICULTIES.....	268
" 6. FATHER NIEL AND THE CHURCH-WARDENS.....	278
" 7. FATHER FELIX DE ANDREIS.....	285
" 8. ST. MARY'S OF THE BARRENS UNDER FATHER ROSATI..	292
" 9. THE LADIES OF THE SACRED HEART.....	300
" 10. FATHER CHARLES NERINCKX AND HIS RELATIONS WITH ST. LOUIS.....	308
" 11. THE INDIAN MISSIONS AND THE JESUITS—I.....	318
" 12. THE INDIAN MISSIONS AND THE JESUITS—II.....	327
" 13. THE JESUIT BEGINNINGS AT ST. FERDINAND.....	335
" 14. THE FIRST INDIAN SCHOOL IN MISSOURI.....	340
" 15. THE FIRST INDIAN MISSIONARY EFFORTS OF THE JESUITS.....	347
" 16. THE ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY.....	354
" 17. STE. GENEVIEVE UNDER FATHERS PRATTE AND DAHMEN.....	361
" 18. CATHOLIC NEW MADRID.....	371
" 19. ST. MARY'S OF THE BARRENS UNDER FATHER TORNA- TORE.....	379
" 20. BISHOP DU BOURG AND THE COADJUTORSHIP.....	386
" 21. ROSATI'S ELECTION AS COADJUTOR-BISHOP.....	399
" 22. LINKING OLD AND NEW.....	408

## PART II

## THE DIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

## BOOK I

*Bishop Joseph Rosati of St. Louis*

	PAGE
CHAPTER 1. THE DIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS.....	419
" 2. ROSATI'S VISITATION IN THE DIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS	431
" 3. PROGRESS OF A DECADE.....	438
" 4. THE SISTERS OF CHARITY.....	447
" 5. FATHER JOSEPH ANTHONY LUTZ, INDIAN MISSIONARY.	452
" 6. FATHER EDMUND SAULNIER AND THE CHURCH OF ARKANSAS .....	469
" 7. POST OF ARKANSAS, NEW GASCONY AND LITTLE ROCK.	479
" 8. THE CHURCH IN CAPE GIRARDEAU.....	490
" 9. THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA.....	499
" 10. BISHOP ROSATI'S CATHEDRAL.....	508
" 11. THE MISSOURI RIVER PARISHES.....	515
" 12. THE GOOD SHEPHERD IN THE WILDERNESS.....	523
" 13. THREE CROWDED YEARS OF BISHOP ROSATI'S LIFE....	528
" 14. GALENA, DUBUQUE AND PRAIRIE DU CHIEN—I....	537
" 15. GALENA, DUBUQUE AND PRAIRIE DU CHIEN—II....	543
" 16. FATHER SAINT CYR AND THE CHURCH IN CHICAGO...	552
" 17. PETER PAUL LEFEVERE OF SALT RIVER.....	565
" 18. FATHER LEFEVERE'S FAR-FLUNG MISSIONS.....	579
" 19. FATHER SAMUEL MAZZUCHELLI, O. P.....	590
" 20. FATHER MAZZUCHELLI AND THE CHURCH OF GALENA..	599
" 21. CATHOLIC BEGINNINGS OF KANSAS CITY.....	608
" 22. FATHER BRICKWEDDE OF QUINCY.....	614
" 23. THE VISITANDINES OF KASKASKIA.....	626
" 24. THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH.....	634
" 25. THE KICKAPOO MISSION.....	640
" 26. THE POTAWATOMI MISSION OF COUNCIL BLUFFS....	653
" 27. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE OREGON MISSIONS.....	664
" 28. THE POTAWATOMI MISSION OF SUGAR CREEK.....	677
" 29. EARLY CHURCH FOUNDATIONS IN CENTRAL MISSOURI.	689
" 30. FATHER JOHN TIMON, VISITOR OF THE LAZARISTS....	701

	PAGE
CHAPTER 31. THE LA SALLE MISSION.....	707
"    32. ST. MICHAEL'S OF FREDERICKTOWN AND FATHER CELLINI .....	721
"    33. THE FIRST SYNOD OF ST. LOUIS.....	730
"    34. ALONG SANGAMON RIVER AND CROOKED CREEK.....	741
"    35. FATHER HILARY TUCKER IN QUINCY.....	753
"    36. THE EARLY GERMAN PARISHES OF SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS .....	765
"    37. THE EARLY ENGLISH SPEAKING PARISHES OF SOUTH- WESTERN ILLINOIS.....	774
"    38. BISHOP ROSATI'S LAST YEAR IN HIS DIOCESE.....	779

## BOOK II

### *Bishop Peter Richard Kenrick, Coadjutor to Bishop Rosati*

CHAPTER	1. BISHOP ROSATI AND HIS COADJUTOR.....	787
"	2. BISHOP PETER RICHARD KENRICK OF ST. LOUIS.....	795
"	3. THE CATHEDRAL PARISH OF ST. LOUIS.....	802
"	4. THE ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY AND THE COLLEGE CHURCH	809

## BOOK III

### *Peter Richard Kenrick Bishop of St. Louis*

CHAPTER	1. BISHOP KENRICK AND THE LEOPOLDINE SOCIETY.....	817
"	2. THE FIRST FRUITS OF BISHOP KENRICK'S SOLICITUDE.	825
"	3. THE DIOCESAN SEMINARY.....	836
"	4. NORTHEAST MISSOURI.....	845
"	5. LOSS OF TERRITORY BUT GAIN OF SOULS.....	854

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ARCHBISHOP JOHN J. GLENNON.....	FRONTISPIECE
	PAGE
THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION.....	v
FATHER JAMES MARQUETTE, S. J.....	1
KASKASKIA COLLEGE.....	10
OLD BELL OF KASKASKIA.....	65
MAP OF EARLIEST ST. LOUIS.....	99
SIGNATURES OF PRIESTS AND PRELATES.....	108
FATHER P. GIBAULT.....	124
THE OLD SPANISH CHURCH.....	140
SIGNATURES OF STE. GENEVIEVE PRIESTS.....	198
SIGNATURES OF EARLY CATHOLIC LAYMEN.....	247
BISHOP WILLIAM L. V. DU BOURG.....	261
BISHOP DU BOURG'S CATHEDRAL.....	268
FATHER FELIX DE ANDREIS, C. M.....	285
JESUIT NOVITATE AT FLORISSANT.....	335
THE OLD ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY.....	354
FATHER DAHMEN'S CHURCH AT STE. GENEVIEVE.....	361
ST. MARY'S OF THE BARRENS.....	379
OUTLINE MAP OF ST. LOUIS DIOCESE.....	417
BISHOP JOSEPH ROSATI OF ST. LOUIS.....	439
POST OF ARKANSAS.....	479
FATHER JOHN TIMON, C. M.....	490
BISHOP ROSATI'S CATHEDRAL.....	508
BISHOP BRUTÉ'S MAP OF WISCONSIN.....	537
MAP OF THE MISSIONARY COUNTRY.....	640
BISHOP PETER RICHARD KENRICK, COADJUTOR.....	795



PART ONE

---

THE ERA OF PREPARATION

BOOK I

*The Early Missions*  
*On the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers*





REV. JAMES MARQUETTE, S. J.

First White Resident of Chicago.



## BOOK I

# THE EARLY MISSIONS

### CHAPTER 1

#### THE CROSS TRIUMPHANT AND THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS

It is an incontestible fact that the beautiful forest-clad embankment of the river whereon the great spiritual as well as civic Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley was to arise in splendor and wealth and power, had been beheld by no white man's eye before that memorable day at the end of June 1673, when Joliet and Marquette, and their five companions swept by in two fragile barks on the united but not commingled current of the Missouri and Mississippi, on their voyage of exploration to the unknown lands of the South. The central region of the future diocese and archdiocese of St. Louis, though bright and beautiful by nature, still lay in the darkness of ancient night, illumined only by a few faint stars of natural religion. The Indian tribes that regarded it as their ancestral home, the Osage, Missouri and Illinois, like all the other nations of North America, were individually a strange combination of noble, and often heroic, qualities with the most abject superstition and moral turpitude. The Indian was by nature generous and hospitable, and yet he could become guilty of the most savage cruelty. Loving his native valleys and hills he was a wanderer without a fixed abode. His faith in the great Spirit was deep and sincere and yet he had no outward sacrifice, no outward form of worship. A certain glamour of mystery encompassed him when viewed from a distance, but quickly vanished on nearer approach.

To win such tantalizing creatures for the Kingdom of God; to bring them the light of Faith, to raise the Cross triumphant among them was the desire of countless souls since the days of the earliest explorers and conquerors of the New World.

At the beginning of the great age of European discovery and conquest two of its leading maritime nations, Spain and France, still adhered with heart and soul and mind to the Catholic Faith as a living reality. Accordingly the cross accompanied the national banner; the priest and monk walked side by side with the commander; the con-

version of the natives to the true religion was one of the main objects of every expedition.

So it was in Spanish America, so it was in the French possessions in Canada, the region of the Great Lakes, in the Illinois Country and Louisiana. But whilst the French were the first to arrive in the heart of the continent, the Spaniards preceded them by 132 years, on the outskirts of the future Arch-diocese of St. Louis, in Arkansas its southern limit, and in Kansas or Nebraska to the West.<sup>1</sup>

The first efforts to carry the light of the gospel into the heart of this vast and sparsely populated region date back to the year 1541, 132 years before the voyage of Father Marquette. It was in 1541 that the Spaniard Fernando De Soto crossed the Mississippi River at a point a few miles below the present city of Memphis, and marched northward along the western border of the "Great River", through the country now called Arkansas, and arrived at a place near New Madrid, in South-East Missouri. And it was in the same year that Don Francisco Vasquez de Coronado reached the goal of his journey in the country of Quivira, somewhere "in northeastern Kansas perhaps not far from the boundary of Nebraska." Both expeditions were accompanied by priests: Coronado by the Franciscan Friar Juan de Padilla, De Soto "by twelve priests, eight brothers and four monks."

De Soto and his little army arrived on the coast of Florida on Whitsunday, 1539 and after many days of toil and strife reached the town on the Mississippi River over which the Cazique Casqui presided.<sup>2</sup>

"The greater part of the way," says one of the companions of De Soto, "lay through fields thickly set with great towns, two or three of them to be seen from one. De Soto sent word by an Indian to the cacique, that he was coming to obtain his friendship; to which he received for answer, that he would be welcomed, and all that his Lordship required from him should be done. And the cacique or chief, sent him on the road a present of skins, shawls and fish."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The limits of the diocese of St. Louis at the time of its largest extent under Bishop Rosati were the southern bounds of Arkansas, to a line drawn northward from Fort Massac, near Cairo, through Illinois to the southern bounds of Canada, thence westward to the Rocky Mountains and following them to the latitude of the southern boundary of Arkansas back to the start.

<sup>2</sup> There are three accounts of De Soto's Expedition by eye witnesses: The Narrative of the Gentleman of Elvas; The Relation of Biedma and The Narrative of Ranjel. Then there is the "La Florida del Inca" of Garcilasso de la Vega, who states that in Peru he had met many of De Soto's gentlemen and soldiers. It is Garcilasso that mentions the names of the priests and monks with the expedition. The Narrative of the Gentleman of Elvas may be found in a good translation in *Spanish Explorers in the Southern United States*, pp. 129-272.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis, Theodor H., in *Spanish Explorers*, p. 206.

Accompanied by many of his people, the cacique came half a league on the road from the town to receive the Governor, and greeting him very humbly he invited him to take lodging in his houses. The cacique went home for the night, but "returned with many Indians singing, who, when they had come to where the Governor was, all prostrated themselves. Among them were two blind men." The cacique made an address of which the writer gives but the substance: "The cacique said, that inasmuch as the Governor was the son of the Sun, he begged him to restore sight to those Indians. Whereupon the blind men arose and very earnestly entreated him to do so. De Soto answered them that in the heavens above there was One who had the power, to make them whole and do whatever they could ask of Him, whose servant he was; that this great Lord made the heavens and the earth, and man after His image, that He had suffered on the cross to save the human race, and risen from the tomb on the third day in what of man there was of him dying, what of divinity being immortal; and that, having ascended into heaven, He was there with open arms to receive all that would be converted to Him." The Governor then directed a lofty cross of wood to be made and set up on the highest part of the town, declaring to the cacique, that the Christian worshipped that cross in the form and memory of the true one on which Christ suffered. He placed himself with his people before it, on their knees, which the Indians did likewise; and he told them that from that time on they should thus worship the Lord, of whom he had spoken to them, that was in the Heavens, and should ask Him for whatsoever they stood in need of."<sup>4</sup> After this they chanted the *Te Deum Laudamus*, that canticle which the custom of the Catholic Church has consecrated to be at once a testimonial of public joy, and thanksgiving for favors received from Heaven, and a prayer for a continuance of its mercies.

The Indians broke forth in demonstrations of joy and gratitude. The Governor marched away to other scenes, in his weary quest after gold and adventure, to find his last resting place in the waters of the Great River he had discovered. But far away to the Northwest, yet within the one-time limits of St. Louis Diocese, a similar scene was enacted.<sup>5</sup>

It was in the year 1530 that Francisco Vasquez Coronado, having reached Cibola, asked the people of the province "to tell their friends and neighbors that Christians had come into the country, whose only desire it was to be their friends, and to find out about good lands to live in."<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 207-208.

<sup>5</sup> Narrative of the Expedition of Coronado, by Pedro de Castañeda, edited by F. W. Hodge, in *Spanish Explorers*, pp. 275-387.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 306.

Coronado had in his company four friars, three of whom were priests, and the fourth a lay-brother. Fray Marcos de Nizza, the Provincial of the Order in Mexico, returned home after the army reached Lune-Cibola, in 1540. Fray Juan de la Cruz, already of advanced age, and Brother Louis remained with the Indians in New Mexico. The fourth Fray Juan de Padilla, comparatively a young and vigorous man, accompanied Coronado to Quivira, that is, the region of northeastern Kansas, probably near the Nebraska border.<sup>7</sup> "The Quiviras were Indians of the plains living chiefly from the buffalo, and from very limited agriculture, changing the sites of their hamlets as the bison moved to and fro."

Some say they were of the tribe of the Wichitas: Father Shine places their habitat considerably farther north in the interior of the state of Nebraska.<sup>8</sup> But as both locations are within the ancient limits of the diocese of St. Louis, we need not here decide the question, although the opinion of Bandelier seems to have greater weight.

Certain it is that the Quivira Indians were glad to have Fray Juan de Padilla with them. When Coronado and his little army started on the homeward journey from New Mexico, in April 1542, Fray Juan de Padilla asked and received permission to return to the Quivira Indians, because his teaching seemed to bear fruit among them. He took along the most necessary equipments for saying Mass, some provisions, and at least one horse. His journey fell in the late summer or early fall of 1542. He had with him Fray Juan de la Cruz, one Portuguese soldier, two servants and some Mexican Indians. On their way they passed through Pecos, where Brother Louis was already established. They reached Quivira and were well received.<sup>9</sup>

Coronado had caused a large cross to be erected in or near one of the villages. This cross was a starting point for the missionary. All went well for a time; but the zeal of the missionary inspired him with the desire of preaching the gospel to the neighboring nations also. This was interpreted by the Quiviras as the act of a traitor, and by the other tribes as that of a spy. The outcome of this missionary journey is related by Mota-Padilla in his *History of New Galicia*: "The Friar left Quivira with a small escort, against the will of the Indians of that village, who loved him as their father. But at one day's journey he was met by Indians on the war-path, and knowing their evil intentions, he requested the Portuguese to flee, since the latter was on horseback, and to take with him the Donados and the boys,

---

<sup>7</sup> Bandelier, A. F. Fray Juan de Padilla in *American Catholic Quarterly*, vol. XV, p. 560.

<sup>8</sup> Shine, Rev. Michael A., "The Lost Province of Quivira" in *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. II, April 1916, p. 3-18.

<sup>9</sup> *Spanish Explorers*, pp. 372-373.

who, being young, were able to run and save themselves. Being defenceless, they all fled as he desired, and the blessed Father, kneeling down, offered up his life, which he sacrificed for the good of the souls of others. He thus realized his most ardent desire—the felicity of martyrdom by the arrows of these barbarians, who afterwards threw his body into a pit and covered it with innumerable rocks. The Portuguese and the Indians, returning to Quivira, gave notice there of what happened, and the natives felt it deeply on account of the love which they had for their Father. They would have regretted it still more had they been able to appreciate the extent of their loss. The day of his death is not known, although it is regarded as certain that it occurred in the year 1542. Don Pedro de Tobar, in some papers which he wrote and left at the town of Culiacan, states that the Indians had gone out to kill this blessed Father in order to obtain his ornaments, and that there was a tradition of miraculous signs connected with his death, such as inundations, comets, balls of fire and the sun becoming darkened.”<sup>10</sup>

How the two companions of Fray Juan de Padilla died, we have no direct testimony. Yet, it seems very probable that they also gained the crown of Martyrdom. As Bandelier so touchingly says: “Such is the funeral oration—simple, but pathetic from its very simplicity. Of these, the two old monks, Fray Juan de la Cruz and Fray Luis, remaining alone in the newly-discovered land, happy to conclude their days there in whichever way it might be, provided it was in the service of their Lord and Master and for the honor and glory of his name.

“The end of Fray Juan de Padilla was different. As his life had been of a more vigorous cast, so his martyrdom sounded high through the land. His Sepulchre in Kansas has never been found, but it is noteworthy that from Mexico, as well as in later years from New Mexico, all attempts on the part of the Spaniards to penetrate beyond the region where his death occurred have signally failed. That region is the same where the hardiest pioneers of Catholic civilization coming from the south met, figuratively speaking, the pioneers of Catholic civilization from Canada. The tomb of Fray Juan de Padilla, therefore, marks not a *ne plus ultra*, but the point where the two standard-bearers of Catholicism came together to join both ends of the advance of Catholic faith across the North American Continent.”<sup>11</sup>

It is a reflection replete with interest, that nearly four centuries ago, the Cross, the type of our beautiful religion, was planted on the banks of the Mississippi and of the Missouri, and the silent forests of

---

<sup>10</sup> Mota-Padilla, *Historia de Nuova Galicia*, p. 167, quoted by Bandelier, *l. c.*, pp. 563-564.

<sup>11</sup> Bandelier, *l. c.*, p. 565.

the South were awakened by the Christian's hymn of gratitude and praise, and the broad plains of the West were bedewed by the blood of martyrdom.

The effect of both journeys was vivid, but transitory, "a voice crying in the wilderness," and was not to be heard again in those savage regions for many generations to come. It was as if a lightning gleam had broken for a moment upon a benighted world, startling it with sudden effulgence, only to leave it in tenfold gloom. The real dawning was yet afar off from the hills and prairies of this far western land.

It came, at last, with Joliet and Marquette's discovery of the Mississippi River, two hundred and fifty-five years ago.

## CHAPTER 2

### FATHER JAMES MARQUETTE AND M. JOLIET

In recounting the labors and vicissitudes of the early explorers of the Mississippi River and its tributaries we must invert the usual order of appreciation. To the Church-historian the lives and deeds of Marquette, Hennepin, Saint Cosme, of Joliet, La Salle and Tonti, and the magnificent band of their companions and successors, are important, first of all, in as far as they served the cause of religion, and only in a secondary way, as serving the cause of geographic knowledge and the spread of commerce and civilization. It is therefore of little consequence here whether Father Marquette or Louis Joliet was the official leader of the first voyage of exploration.<sup>1</sup> What interests us most is that Father Marquette was the first Catholic priest that traversed the full length of the territory which was to become the Archdiocese of St. Louis, from Prairie du Chien to the mouth of the Arkansas river, whilst the priestly companions of De Soto and Coronado only touched its southern and western fringes. It is the glorious name of Father Marquette, Jesuit priest and missionary, that stands at the head and front of Christianity in the Mississippi Valley. For the establishment of the Christian religion in the heart of the continent began with the conversion of the Kaskaskia and Peoria Indians on the Illinois river, a work which Father Marquette inaugurated by his perilous voyage. Yet, even in this regard Joliet deserves warm recognition, as he was beyond doubt the official commander of the expedition and, as such, greatly advanced the spiritual interests for which Father Marquette had been sent along with him by his superiors. But if Joliet was the commander of the expedition, as he certainly was, Father Marquette was just as certainly no mere chaplain. Indeed the expedition was sent out by the government for the purpose of discovery and the formation of friendly relations with the natives: yet the spread of religion among the tribes was never absent from the intentions of the government of Catholic France. As Bancroft tells us, "It was neither commercial enterprise, nor royal ambition which carried the power of France into the heart of our continent: the motive was religion."<sup>2</sup> Hence the representative of the civil power

---

<sup>1</sup> On this question and on the entire matter the learned work of the Franciscan Father Francis Borgia Steck, Ph. D., "The Joliet-Marquette Expedition 1673" gives the most exhaustive and reliable information, although not all the conclusions seem convincing.

<sup>2</sup> History of the United States, 1844, Vol. III, p. 121.

cooperated with the representative of the Church: and each had an equal interest in the project, and deserves an equal share in the honor. That the person of Joliet became obscured by the more illustrious personality of Father Marquette is owing to several unfortunate circumstances, chief among them the loss of his papers just before his arrival at Quebec, thus leaving Father Marquette as the main witness in regard to the momentous events of their common voyage.

Neither Joliet nor Marquette was the first to divine the secret of the mighty river of the West. Others had blazed the way to the post of vantage, Machillimackinac, at the juncture of Lake Superior and Michigan, and had gathered information from the Indians that proved very useful to the explorers. They were for the most part children of Catholic France, the France of Louis XIII and his splendid son, brave, joyous, cultured, and above all, animated by the spirit of religion; men to whom the task was assigned by Providence to open the interior of the North-American continent to the Church and civilization. Following in the wake of Cartier, the intrepid Champlain founded the city of Quebec at the junction of the St. Charles River with the St. Lawrence—1608, and proceeding up the mighty river, planted the Lilies of France on the banks of Lake Huron long before the landing of the May-Flower on the rugged coast of New England—1620. The first part of the Seventeenth century was devoted to the exploration of the Great Lakes. In 1634 Jean Nicollet,<sup>3</sup> one of Champlain's companions, passed through the Straits of Mackinac and reached the country around the Fox and Wisconsin rivers. Meanwhile the Jesuit Fathers had begun a flourishing mission among the Huron Indians at the foot of Lake George. From this as a base, in 1643, a missionary exploring party went to the strait where the waters leap down from Lake Superior. This they christened the Sault de Ste. Marie.<sup>4</sup> It was here that St. Isaac Jogues prayed and preached to the tribesmen of the upper lakes. In 1669 Father Claude Allouez, who had traced the entire coast-line of Lake Michigan before 1670 opened a number of missions in the Indian Villages on the eastward flowing streams, and incidentally gathered all information about the far western countries and the mysterious river flowing either to the west or south.

It was a younger companion of Allouez, Father James Marquette, that was to plow the waves of the great river and to carry the first tidings of the Gospel to the nations living on its borders. James Marquette was born at Laon in 1637, entered the Jesuit Order in

---

<sup>3</sup> R. S. Thwaites, *Father Marquette*, p. 160, cf. "The Journey of Jean Nicolet" by Father Vimont, 1634, in "Early Narratives of the Northwest," edited by Louise Phelps Kellogg, Ph. D.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

1654, was sent to the mission in Canada in 1666, and appeared in the west in 1669 at the mission of Pointe de St. Esprit, near the western end of Lake Superior. Here he received frequent visits from certain Illinois Indians, who had made a thirty days journey by land from their home which lay to the southwest of La Pointe, and "piteously entreated" him to visit their people. "They believe" wrote Father Marquette, "that I will spread peace everywhere I go." "When the Illinois come to La pointe, they pass a large river almost a league wide. It runs north and south and so far that the Illinois, who do not know what canoes are, have never yet heard of its mouth;" . . . "If the Indians who promise to make me a canoe, do not fail to keep their word, we shall go into this river as soon as we can with a Frenchman. We shall visit the nations that inhabit it in order to open the way to so many of our Fathers who have long awaited this happiness."<sup>5</sup>

In 1671 Father Marquette was forced by the threatened attack of the Sioux to fly with his band of Huron Christians to the shelter of St. Ignace on the northern side of the Strait of Mackinac. Here the great call to more heroic endeavor reached him. We will give his own words:

"The Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin—Whom I have always invoked since I have been in this country of the Ottawas, to obtain from God the grace of being able to visit the nations who dwell along the Mississippi River, was precisely the day on which Monsieur Joliet arrived with orders from Monsieur the Count de Frontenac, Our Governor, and Monsieur Talon, our Intendant, to undertake this discovery with me. I was all the more delighted at this good news, since I saw that my plans were about to be accomplished; and since I found myself in the blessed necessity of exposing my life for the salvation of all these peoples, and especially of the Illinois, who had very urgently entreated me, when I was at the Pointe De St. Esprit, to carry the word of God to their country. Accordingly, on the 17th day of May, 1673, we started from the Mission of St. Ignace at Michilimakinac, where I then was."<sup>6</sup>

Above all, I placed our voyage under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Immaculate, promising her that, if she granted us the favor of discovering the great river, I would give it the name of the Concep-

---

<sup>5</sup> These quotations are taken from *Relation 1669-70, Ottawa Part* in Shea "Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley," pp. LIV-LVI, *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> "Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents" edited Reuben Gold Thwaites, vol. 59, p. 89—Doubt has been cast on the authenticity of Father Marquette's Narrative of 1673; yet whether it be Marquette's own work or, as Dr. Steck holds, "in substance the account drawn up by Joliet and sent to Quebec to Marquette shortly before the latter's second voyage to the Illinois Country," it can certainly be relied upon for the discoveries made and the events recorded. Cf. Steck, Rev. F. B., "The Joliet-Marquette Expedition, 1673," p. 312.

tion, and that I would also make the first Mission that I should establish among those new peoples, bear the same name. This I have actually done, among the Illinois.”<sup>7</sup>

Father Marquette was ready to start at once, undismayed by the glowing terms which some of the Indians, among whom he labored, set forth the relentless cruelty of the nations he was about to visit. “I shall gladly lay down my life for the salvation of souls,” was the reply with which he silenced every suggestion of affectionate apprehension. With Joliet as his principal companion and five others whose names have not reached our times, he set out on his adventurous expedition, in two birch-bark canoes from the bay of Lake Michigan now called Green Bay.

Ascending Fox River, in navigating which they encountered considerable difficulty, in consequence of the numerous rapids which obstruct its course, they reached a high point near its source: where they found a village consisting of three tribes, Miamis, Maskoutens, and Kikabous. Father Marquette was greatly consoled at seeing a handsome Cross erected in the middle of the village, and adorned with many white skins, red belts, and bows and arrows, which these good people had offered to the great Manitou (This is the name which they give to God). They did this to thank Him for having had pity on them during the winter, by giving them an abundance of game when they most dreaded famine.”<sup>8</sup>

The party continued their journey on the next day. They knew they stood upon the great divide between the valley of the great lakes and the valley of the mysterious river they were seeking. Father Marquette says: “We knew that, at three leagues from the Maskoutens, was a river which discharged into the Mississippi. We knew also that the direction we were to follow in order to reach it, was west-southwesterly. But the road is broken by so many swamps and small lakes that it is easy to lose one’s way, especially as the river leading thither is so full of wild oats, that it is difficult to find the channel. For this reason we greatly needed our two guides, who safely conducted us to a portage of 2,700 paces, and helped us to transport our canoes to enter that river; after which they returned home, leaving us alone in this unknown country, in the hands of Providence.”<sup>9</sup> Having passed over the portage which divided the Fox from the Wisconsin Rivers, they once more committed themselves to their frail barks, following the course of the river which flows westwardly, until they found themselves floating on the bosom of the Father of Waters, on the 17th of June, 1673. Great and inexpressible was the joy of Father Marquette.

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p. 93.

<sup>8</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” vol. 59, p. 103.

<sup>9</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” vol. 59, p. 105.



Old Immaculate Conception at Kaskaskia, where Fathers Meurin and Gibault ministered. In the foreground the old "Jesuit College".



But his labor had scarcely begun. On and on they drifted on the placid waters through scenes as fresh and beautiful and strange as if they had just been called forth from nothingness by the voice of God. It was a land of mountains and plains, of forests and prairies, of birds and beasts, but seemingly devoid of human life. "We continued to advance," says Father Marquette, "But as we knew not whither we were going,—for we had proceeded over one hundred leagues without discovering anything except animals and birds,—we kept well on our guard. On this account we made only a small fire on land, toward evening, to cook our meals; and, after supper, we remove ourselves as far from it as possible, and pass the night in our canoes, which we anchor in the river at some distance from the shore."<sup>10</sup>

"Finally, on the 25th of June, we perceived on the water's edge some tracks of men, and a narrow and somewhat beaten path leading to a fine prairie. We stopped to examine it; and, thinking that it was a road which led to some village of savages, we resolved to go and reconnoiter it. We therefore left our two canoes under the guard of our people, strictly charging them not to allow themselves to be surprised; after which Monsieur Joliet and I undertook this investigation—a rather hazardous one for two men who exposed themselves, alone, to the mercy of a barbarous and unknown people. We silently followed the narrow path, and after walking about two leagues, we discovered a village on the bank of a river, and two others on a hill distant about half a league from the first. We therefore decided that it was time to reveal ourselves. This we did by shouting with all our energy, and stopped, without advancing any farther. On hearing the shout, the savages quickly issued from their cabins, and having probably recognized us as Frenchmen, especially when they saw a black-gown,—or, at least having no cause for distrust, as we were only two men, and had given them notice of our arrival,—they deputed four old men to come and speak to us. Two of these bore tobacco-pipes, finely ornamented and adorned with various feathers. They walked slowly, and raised their pipes toward the sun, seemingly offering them to it to smoke,—without, however, saying a word. They spent a rather long time in covering the short distance between their village and us. Finally, when they had drawn near, they stopped to consider us attentively. I was reassured when I observed these ceremonies, which with them are performed only among friends; and much more so, when I saw them clad in cloth, for I judged thereby that they were our allies. I therefore spoke to them first, and asked them who they were. They replied that they were Illinois; and, as a token of peace, they offered us their pipes to smoke. They afterward invited us

---

<sup>10</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 59, p. 110.

to enter their village, where all the people impatiently awaited us. These pipes for smoking tobacco are called in this country Calumets.”<sup>11</sup>

“At the door of the cabin in which we were to be received was an old man, who awaited us in a rather surprising attitude, which constitutes a part of the ceremonial that they observe when they receive strangers. This man stood erect, and stark naked, with his hands extended and lifted toward the sun, as if he wished to protect himself from its rays, which nevertheless shone upon his face through his fingers. When we came near him, he paid us this compliment: “How beautiful the sun is, O Frenchman, when thou comest to visit us! All our village awaits thee, and thou shalt enter all our cabins in peace.” Having said this, he made us enter his own, in which were a crowd of people; they devoured us with their eyes, but, nevertheless, observed profound silence.

After we had taken our places, the usual civility of the country was paid to us, which consisted in offering us the Calumet.

While all the elders smoked after us, in order to do us honor, we received an invitation on behalf of the great Captain of all the Illinois to proceed to his village where he wished to hold a Council with us. We went thither in a large company. For all these people, who had never seen any Frenchmen among them, could not cease looking at us. They lay on the grass along the road; they preceded us, and then retraced their steps to come and see us again. All this was done noiselessly, and with marks of great respect for us.<sup>12</sup>

“Seeing all assembled and silent, I spoke to them by four presents that I gave them. By the first, I told them that we were journeying peacefully to visit the nations dwelling on the river as far as the sea. By the second, I announced to them that God, who had created them, had pity on them, inasmuch as, after they had so long been ignorant of Him, He wished to make Himself known to all the peoples; that I was sent by Him for that purpose; and that it was for them to acknowledge and obey Him. By the third, I said that the great Captain of the French informed them that He it was who restored peace everywhere; and that He had subdued the Iroquois. Finally, by the fourth we begged them to give us all the information that they had about the sea, and about the nations through whom we must pass to reach it.

“When I had finished my speech, the Captain arose, and, resting his hand upon the head of a little slave whom he wished to give us, he spoke thus: ‘I thank thee, Black Gown, and thee, O Frenchman’—addressing himself to Monsieur Joliet,—‘for having taken so much trouble to come to visit us. Never has the earth been so beautiful, or the sun so bright, as today; never has our river been so calm, or

---

<sup>11</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” vol. 59, p. 115.

<sup>12</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” vol. 59, p. 119.

so clear of rocks, which your canoes have removed in passing; never has our tobacco tasted so good, or our corn appeared so fine, as we now see them. Here is my son, whom I give thee to show thee my heart. I beg thee to have pity on me, and on all my Nation. It is thou who knowest the great spirit who has made us all. It is thou who speakest to Him, and who hearest His word. Beg Him to give me life and health, and to come and dwell with us, in order to make us know Him.' <sup>13</sup>

This first meeting of white men and Illinois Indians in their home on the Mississippi took place on the northern bank of the Des Moines River<sup>14</sup> at its confluence with the Mississippi. The Illinois were a confederation of five tribes, with villages on both sides of the Great River. On Father Marquette's map as well as on that of Joliet (1674) the villages of the Illinois that were visited, are placed on the west side of the Mississippi. The main habitat, however, was Central Illinois. The Illinois are of the Algonquin stock, and Father Marquette, who had learnt five different Indian languages, was able to converse with them in their own. The reference to the Iroquois made a deep impression on all, as this cruel and warlike nation, or rather confederacy of nations, was then waging a war of extermination against all the more peaceful tribes of the lake-region, and threatening fierce inroads into the very country of the Illinois.

Father Marquette's Journal contains many a word of high praise for his new friends and children. "Their bodies are shapely; they are active and very skillful with bows and arrows. They also use guns, which they buy from our savage allies who trade with our French. They use them especially to inspire, through their noise and smoke, terror in their enemies; the latter do not use guns, and have never seen any, since they live too far toward the West."<sup>15</sup> Having received the Calumet, the pipe of peace, from his friends and having promised to visit their people in their ancestral home on the Illinois River, Father Marquette and his companions returned to their boats and abandoned themselves to the current. In the neighborhood of what is now the city of Alton they discovered a strange monument of ancient days. "While skirting some rocks, which by their height and length inspired awe, we saw upon one of them two painted monsters, which at first made us afraid, and upon which the boldest savages dare not long rest their eyes. They are as large as a calf; they have horns on their heads like those of deer, a horrible look, red eyes, a beard like a tiger's, a face somewhat like a man's, a body covered with scales, and so long a tail that it winds all around the body, passing above the head

<sup>13</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 59, p. 121.

<sup>14</sup> C. S. Weld in his "Joliet and Marquette in Iowa" maintains that this group of villages was not on the Des Moines but on the Iowa River.

<sup>15</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 59, p. 138.

and going back between the legs, ending in a fish's tail."<sup>16</sup> The explorers of the Mississippi were about to discover the mouth of its greatest tributary, the Missouri. Father Marquette continues: "While conversing about these monsters and sailing quietly in clear and calm water, we heard the noise of a rapid, into which we were about to run. I have seen nothing more dreadful. An accumulation of large and entire trees, branches, and floating islands, was issuing from the mouth of the river Pekitanoui, with such impetuosity that we could not, without great danger, risk passing through it. So great was the agitation that the water was very muddy, and could not become clear."<sup>17</sup> Passing unharmed through this dangerous whirlpool, the little canoes bore on with greater speed over the waters that washed the rocky shore whereon the great city of St. Louis was to rise in beauty at some far off date, passed the village of the Tamaroa on the eastern bank, greeted the little river that was to receive the flight of the Kaskaskias, and the Mission of the Immaculate Conception, skirted the grand tower that separated the river into two channels, and sped through the cross-current made by the mighty Ohio, the Beautiful River of later times. Pursuing their course without the occurrence of any incident until the party arrived at the mouth of the Arkansas River. "We had gone down to near the 33rd degree of latitude," says Father Marquette, "having proceeded nearly all the time in a southerly direction, when we perceived a village on the water's edge, called Mitchigamea. We had recourse to our Patroness and guide, the Blessed Virgin Immaculate; and we greatly needed her assistance, for we heard from afar the savages who were inciting one another to the fray by their continual yells. They were armed with bows, arrows, hatchets, clubs and shields. They prepared to attack us, on both land and water; part of them embarked in great wooden canoes—some to ascend, others to descend the river, in order to intercept us and surround us on all sides. Those who were on land came and went, as if to commence the attack. In fact, some young men threw themselves into the water, to come and seize my canoe; but the current compelled them to return to land. One of them then hurled his club, which passed over without striking us. In vain I showed the calumet, and made them signs that we were not coming to war against them. The alarm continued, and they were already preparing to pierce us with arrows from all sides, when God suddenly touched the hearts of the old men, who were standing at the water's edge. This, no doubt, happened through the sight of our calumet, which they had not clearly distinguished from afar; but as I did not cease displaying it, they were influenced by it, and checked the ardor of their young men. Two of these elders even,—after casting

---

<sup>16</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 59, p. 139.

<sup>17</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 59, p. 141.

into our canoe, as if at our feet, their bows and quivers, to reassure us—entered the canoe, and made us approach the shore, whereon we landed, not without fear on our part. At first, we had to speak by signs, because none of them understood any of the six languages which I spoke. At last, we found an old man who could speak a little Illinois.”<sup>18</sup> Father Marquette soon succeeded to conciliate them. He informed them that his party were going to the sea. He also spoke to them about God and about matters pertaining to their salvation. “This is a seed cast into the ground, which will bear fruit in due time” said the good Father. The Indians told them that there was another village called Akansea, eight or ten leagues lower down where they might obtain the information they desired.

The exploring party embarked early on the following day and were kindly received. But from all they heard about the dangers of the way, and from due consideration of the rapid depletion of their stock of provisions, Marquette and Joliet determined on a homeward course. They had attained the object of their desires, they had discovered the great western river, they had floated down its broad expanse of water upwards of nine-hundred miles. Its unvaried southern direction could not be a matter of a moment’s doubt; and that it debouched into the great Mexican Gulf was now satisfactorily ascertained. “We therefore reascend the Mississippi” writes Father Marquette, “which gives us much trouble in breasting its currents. It is true that we leave it, at about the 38th degree, to enter another river, the Illinois, which greatly, shortens our way, and takes us with but little effort to the lake of the Illinois,” that is, Lake Michigan.<sup>19</sup> “We found on it a village of Illinois, called Kaskaskia, consisting of 74 cabins. They received us very well, and obliged me to promise that I would return to instruct them. One of the chiefs of this nation, with his young men, escorted us to the lake of the Illinois, whence, at last, at the end of September, we reached the Bay des Puants from which we had started at the beginning of June.”<sup>20</sup> During the Fall and Winter Father Marquette wrote out copies of his Journal for his Superior, Father Claude Dablon, and then during the summer months recuperated at the Mission of St. Francis Xavier. Here he received orders to proceed to the Mission of the Immaculate Conception at Kaskaskia, and departed on the 25th of October 1674. Hampered by rain and hail and snow he crossed the portage from Sturgeon Bay to Lake Michigan; then, prevented by illness from traveling, he decided to winter on the river that leads to the Illinois.<sup>21</sup> Here in a wretched

---

<sup>18</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” vol. 59, p. 151.

<sup>19</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” vol. 59, p. 161.

<sup>20</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” vol. 59, p. 162.

<sup>21</sup> The Chicago River near the Portage.

cabin he said mass regularly and administered Holy Communion to his two companions, Jacques and Pierre. Shortly after Christmas, he and his companions made a Novena in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, that he might have the grace to take possession of his mission among the Illinois. Their prayer was granted, and, on the 29th day of March 1675, Father Marquette started for that place with joy and, after eleven days on the way, arrived at his destination three days before Easter. "He was received like an angel from heaven." But we must let Father Dablon tell the splendid story of this reception.

"After he had assembled at various times the chiefs of the nation, with all the old men, that he might sow in their minds the first seeds of the gospel, and after having given instruction in the cabins, which were always filled with a great crowd of people, he resolved to address all in public, in a general assembly which he called together in the open air, the cabins being too small to contain all the people. It was a beautiful prairie, close to a village, which was selected for the great Council; this was adorned, after the fashion of the country, by covering it with mats and bearskins. Then the Father, having directed them to stretch out upon lines several pieces of chinese taffeta, attached to these four large pictures of the Blessed Virgin, which were visible on all sides. The audience was composed of 500 chiefs and elders seated in a circle around the Father, and of all the young men, who remained standing. They numbered more than 1,500 men, without counting the women and children, who are always numerous,—the village being composed of 5 or 600 fires. The Father addressed the whole body of people, and conveyed to them, ten messages, by means of ten presents which he gave them. He explained to them the principal mysteries of our Religion, and the purpose that had brought him to their country. Above all, he preached to them Jesus Christ, on the very eve (of that great day) on which He had died upon the Cross for them, as well as for all the rest of mankind; then he said Holy Mass. On the third day after, which was Easter Sunday, things being prepared in the same manner as on Thursday, he celebrated the holy mysteries for the second time; and by these two, the only sacrifices ever offered there to God, he took possession of that land in the name of Jesus Christ, and gave to that mission the name of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. He was listened to by all those peoples with universal joy; and they prayed him with most earnest entreaty to come back to them as soon as possible, since his sickness obliged him to return. The Father, on his side, expressed to them the affection which he felt for them, and the satisfaction that they had given him; and pledged them his word that he, or some other of our Fathers, would return to carry on that mission so happily inaugurated.

This promise he repeated several times, while parting with them to go upon his way; and he set out with so many tokens of regard on the part of those good peoples that, as a mark of honor, they chose to escort him for more than 30 leagues on the road, vying with each other in taking charge of his slender baggage.<sup>22</sup>

In order to reach his home at St. Ignace Father Marquette with his two companions entered Lake Michigan and coasted along its southern and western shore, but he felt so feeble and exhausted that he was obliged to disembark from his canoe, and on the banks of what is since known as Pere Marquette River, he yielded up his spirit in the depths of the wilderness, thanking the Almighty for his mercy in permitting him to die in the Society of Jesus, alone amidst the forest. His frail body was laid to rest in the spot his death had consecrated; but two years later was removed to the Mission of St. Ignace at Mackinack, where the bones were placed in a small vault in the middle of the church. "The savages often come to pray at his tomb," adds Father Claude Dablon.

Father Marquette was succeeded in the Illinois Mission of the Immaculate Conception by Father Claude Allouez, his former Superior at the Pointe de Saint Esprit. In his sincere and deep humility Father Marquette never realized the vast significance of his discovery. He was glad to do a service to his country France, but his great delight and comfort were the souls whom he had won for Christ. He resembled St. Francis Xavier, not only in the variety of Barbarian languages, which he mastered, but also in the range of his zeal, which made him carry the faith to so many unknown nations, in the gentleness of his love which rendered him beloved by all, in the beauty of his child-like candor, with which he disclosed his heart to his superiors, in his angelic chastity and uninterrupted union with God.<sup>23</sup>

Of Louis Joliet, Father Marquette's companion of the voyage, or if you will, the leader of it, history must in future speak with the highest respect. He had the good will of both Frontenac and Talon, and as it would seem, the Jesuit Superior had commended him to Talon for the enterprise. He knew several of the Indian languages, and manifested remarkable faith in his dealings with the natives. He had an intrepid spirit and a romantic turn of mind. His bodily constitution was hardened to all kinds of hardships and privations. He was one heart and one mind with Father Marquette: With him he shared the dangers of the voyage, and he must share with him the glory of the great discovery. Father Marquette would be the first

---

<sup>22</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 59, p. 189.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Claude Dablon's Circular letter apud Thwaites, "Father Marquette," page 232.

one to give testimony in his favor, if he could be called before the tribunal of history, which has long since decided in his own favor.

Father James Marquette's successor at the mission of the Immaculate Conception at Kaskaskia was Father Claude Allouez, a man not inferior in zeal or ability to any of the great missionaries of his time. He sailed from France in 1658, and after a thorough study of the Algonquin language in Quebec, was sent to the west. On April 27, 1677, he arrived at Kaskaskia on the Illinois River. "I immediately entered the cabin where Father Marquette had lodged, and the sachems with all the people being assembled, I told them the object of my coming among them, namely to preach to them the true living and immortal God and His only Son Jesus Christ." Father Allouez found the village much increased. It was before composed only of one nation, the Kaskaskias, there were now eight, the Kaskaskias having called the others who dwelt in the neighborhood of the Mississippi. After some acquaintance the priest pronounced these savages as naturally high spirited, valorous and daring. "The women dress modestly, the men feel no shame at their own nudity." Polygamy is the chief obstacle to their adopting the Christian religion. But Allouez is very hopeful of a great change to be effected by the children as they grow up. Even of the adults he does not despair, as he writes; "I laid the foundation of this mission by the baptism of thirty-five children, and a sick adult, who soon after died with one infant, to go and take possession of heaven in the name of the whole nation. And we, to take possession of these tribes in the name of Jesus Christ, on the third day of May, the Feast of the Holy Cross, planted in the middle of the village a Cross thirty-five feet in height, chanting the "Vexilla" in the presence of a large number of Illinois of all the nations. Of these I can say in truth that they did not regard Jesus Christ crucified as a folly, or a scandal; on the contrary, they assisted at the ceremony with great respect, and listened with admiration to all I had to say regarding the mystery. The children even came devoutly to kiss the cross, while the grown-up people earnestly entreated me to plant it there so firmly that it might never be in danger of falling."<sup>24</sup> This was the last official act of Father Allouez among his Illinois children. He promised them to return the next year 1678; and, as Father Claude Dablon states at the end of Father Allouez's narrative, he did set out for the mission to remain there two years. But ere he could carry out his purpose La Salle and his force arrived in the Illinois country with three Recollet Fathers, Ribourde, Mambre and Hennepin.

---

<sup>24</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 70, p. 165.

## LASALLE, DE TONTI AND THE RECOLLETS

Whilst Father Marquette's voyage can be justly compared to the journey of an apostle, quiet and lonely in outward form, yet borne onward by a burning zeal for the salvation of souls, the succeeding expedition conducted by LaSalle and Tonti and accompanied by the Recollet<sup>1</sup> Fathers Ribourde, Mambre and Hennepin, bears greater resemblance to a romantic adventure of Knightly Crusaders. Both bore the crown of Christ on their banners. Both strove and suffered for the winning of souls. With LaSalle this purpose often seems secondary, with Father Marquette it always stands foremost and highest. This may be partly owing to the fact that, although Joliet was the official leader of the voyage of exploration Father Marquette was, both intellectually and by force of character, its very head and soul; whilst on the other hand, the Sieur de LaSalle was in every sense the controlling spirit and heroic soul of the entire undertaking. It is a fascinating story of courage, determination and political wisdom, qualities that would have led to the grandest achievements, if they had been combined with the gentleness of manner and the necessary power of bending others to his purpose and leading them as by a silken cord. From LaSalle's brain sprang the grand conception of a New France in America, greater, richer, more powerful than the old, which was to stretch from the northern shores of the great lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Allegheny Mountains to the Vermillion Sea, thus surrounding the struggling colonies of England with an impenetrable wall on all sides except the seaboard of the Atlantic. That he did not attain his purpose does not derogate from the grandeur of the idea. We can here but pass in rapid review the various scenes of this mighty drama, as it is recorded by the Recollet Fathers Hennepin and Le Clerque and by the ever faithful Chevalier de Tonti.

Robert Cavelier Sieur de LaSalle was a native of Normandy. Born at Rouen, November 21, 1643, he received his education in some Jesuit Institution of learning. He entered the Novitiate in Paris October 5th, 1658, and two years later took the three vows under the name Robert Ignatius. 1666 he asked for his release and obtained it on March 28th, 1668, and departed for Canada. He soon made a fortune in the fur trade. This he used for the furtherance of his high ambition to extend the power of France in the new world. Through the influence of Count Frontenac he obtained large powers in this regard from the King, Louis XIV.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Recollets are a branch of the Order of St. Francis.

Frontenac himself ceded to him the Fort he had built on the eastern extremity of Lake Ontario, where the St. Lawrence issues from the lake. The only condition was that La Salle should rebuild the fort with stone and maintain the garrison there at his own expense. To enable the new commander to do this, he was invested with the seignory of a tract of land around it. The discoveries of Marquette left no doubt in LaSalle's mind that the Mississippi emptied into the Gulf of Mexico; yet one of its tributaries might come from China and Japan. An ocean of discovery lay before him. The great Colbert and the King himself were won over. In Paris LaSalle engaged the Chevalier de Tonti, an Italian by birth, and in May 1678 the party of thirty persons set sail for Quebec where they arrived near the end of September. He also engaged three Recollet Fathers: Gabriel Ribourde, Louis Hennepin and Zenobe Mabre, all Flemings, to accompany him on his proposed voyage down the Mississippi to the Gulf. Five other Recollets were to attend the missions at Fort Frontenac and Fort Niagara,<sup>2</sup> which latter stronghold was built by Father Hennepin, November 1678 to August 1679. About two leagues above the Falls of Niagara LaSalle built a ship of sixty tons, the first ship that ever sailed over the waters of the great lakes. It was called the Griffin. Proudly it sailed away August 7th, 1679, over the pathway of Lake Erie and Lake Huron, then through the Straits of Mackinac, the Griffin entered the broad expanse of Lake Michigan, and coasting along its northern borders, cast anchor at an island in the mouth of Green Bay. Laden with furs and peltry the Griffin was sent back to Fort Frontenac, whilst LaSalle and most of his men and three friars, started in boats down Lake Michigan for the Illinois country, and the Mississippi, and the sea. Taking the portage of the Kankakee River they floated down the Illinois until they came to Lake Peoria, then called Pimiteouy, They landed at a large settlement of Indians at the southern end of the lake. Here LaSalle built Fort Creve Coeur. Father Mambre took up his residence there, supplying the place of the Jesuit Allouez. Father Hennepin was dispatched on an exploring trip to discover the sources of the Mississippi. He came as far as the rapids near St. Paul, and called them the Falls of St. Anthony. Being captured by a band of Sioux Indians he was held a prisoner for some time near the mouth of the Wisconsin River. LaSalle on his part started back to Mackinac with three Frenchmen and one Indian, leaving Tonti in chief command at the Creve Coeur fort.

On his way he was so charmed with a high rocky eminence, rising from the river, level at the top and accessible on one side only. He sent word to Tonti to build a fort on the rock. It was done, and in

---

<sup>2</sup> Father Hennepin in his "Louisiana," published the first description of Niagara Falls.

history it bears the honored name of Fort St. Louis. During LaSalle's absence suspicions were rife among the Indians as to the intentions of the Frenchmen, suspicions that seemed to be confirmed by the appearance of an Iroquois war party at the village. The Illinois were defeated and dispersed. The French fort was destroyed by renegade Frenchmen, and Tonti himself and his little band had to withdraw; on the way the venerable Father Gabriel Ribourde was murdered by an Iroquois warrior. Tonti escaped to Green Bay, whilst LaSalle was on his return voyage to the Illinois. He alone was not broken-hearted, although his proud ship the Griffin was lost, his fort at the mouth of the St. Joseph River as well as Fort Creve Coeur were destroyed and many of the men had deserted. He immediately studied out a plan to retrieve his fallen fortunes. He learnt that nearly all the inhabitants of seventeen Illinois villages had crossed the Mississippi River to find safety among the Osages and Missouri Indians. After a long and tedious search LaSalle found Tonti and Mambre in Mackinac, waiting for him and ready to continue his work. In January 1682 LaSalle and his company were ready for the voyage down the Illinois River, and on the 6th of February they found themselves floating safely on the waters of the Mississippi. On the 4th of March LaSalle took possession of the country in the name of the King of France, Louis XIV. The savages were delighted with the splendor of the ceremony. A large cross was erected by the soldiers and adorned with the arms of France. Father Mambre spoke to the multitude of Christ and His love for the Indians. Two weeks were spent in the villages of the Arkansas round about. On the 20th of March they reached the Taensas where the commander was received with elaborate ceremonial. Another cross was planted in the usual manner. At last on the 6th of April the river was observed to divide itself into three arms. LaSalle had found the Gulf. Here at the mouth of the great river a column was erected with this inscription: "Louis the Great, King of France and Navarre, reigns; the 9th of April 1682." The Te Deum was chanted, the muskets were discharged and a shout went up: "Long live the King." Thus did the Sieur de LaSalle take possession of all Louisiana for the crown of France. LaSalle began to ascend the river, on his return to Quebec, but owing to sickness, he did not arrive in that city before the Spring of the following year, 1683. The important discovery he had made was to be immediately communicated to the French Court; He accordingly once more returned to France, where he was favorably received by the Court, from which, notwithstanding some opposition that was made to the undertaking, he obtained four vessels for the purpose of enabling him to enter the Mississippi from the sea, and securing by actual possession, the advantages of the recent discovery. Among his companions, about two hundred in number, were three priests of the

congregation of St. Sulpice, one of whom was a brother of LaSalle, as also four Capuchin Fathers. LaSalle's brother bore the name of Joseph Cavelier. The other Sulpicians were M. Chefdeville and M. de Mainville, called by Joutel Dainmaville. The three Recollets were Fathers Zenobius Mambre, Superior of the Mission, Father Maximus LeClereq, and Father Anastasius Douay, all three of the province of St. Anthony in Artois.<sup>3</sup> Father Zenobius was specially endeared to LaSalle as his inseparable companion during the four years of his conquest of the Illinois and Mississippi rivers.

Starting out from the port of Rochelle, the little fleet was forced to return on account of an accident to the largest ship. Owing to various misunderstandings between LaSalle and the Captain of the expedition, Beaujeu, one of the ships was captured by a Spanish pirate, another vessel was lost with all its cargo in the attempt to land. Beaujeu refused to deliver the cannon and ammunition intended for the colony and, to cap the climax, large bands of Indian warriors made constant attacks on his men. Matagorda Bay had been mistaken for the mouth of the Mississippi. The only vessel which remained at LaSalle's disposal ran aground and sunk during his absence. The equanimity of temper with which he bore these accumulated trials, is, perhaps, the most beautiful part of his character; while the perseverance with which he labored for the attainment of his important design, entitles him to the highest meed of praise. There was now no hope of safety but in gaining the Illinois River by land; and, notwithstanding the appalling difficulties with which such an attempt was attended, he resolved to make the effort. On the 7th of January, 1687, accompanied by twenty men, among them his brother, the Sulpician Father Anastasius, and the Sieur Joutel, he left the fort in the possession of his remaining companions, and set out on his adventurous journey. Proceeding in a northeastern direction, he wandered, during three months, over every variety of country—wide extended plains, and verdant hills; through tangled forests, and rank poisonous swamps; exposed to dangers of the most serious character, and enduring all kinds of privation and suffering.

On the 19th of March 1687 LaSalle was murdered by two of his own men, who shot him from ambush. Joutel says that LaSalle died instantly; but Father Anastasius, who was an eyewitness says: "I saw him fall a step from me, with his face all covered with blood. I

---

<sup>3</sup> Both Recollet Fathers Hennepin and Mambre, the companions of LaSalle's first and second voyages, as well as Fathers Douay and LeClereq, Recollets, Father Joseph Cavelier, Sulpician, an M. Henry Joutel, of the second voyage, have left us authentic accounts of the events they witnessed. They all can be found in John G. Shea's three volume-series, "The Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley."

washed it with tears, exhorting him to die well. He had confessed, and fulfilled his devotions just before we started; he had still time to recapitulate a part of his life, and I gave him absolution. I could not leave the spot where he had expired without having buried him as well as I could, after which I raised a cross over his grave."<sup>4</sup> This account is not as improbable as some writers have considered it. Any Catholic priest would, in a similar case, immediately give absolution, even when in doubt whether the penitent be dying or dead. No doubt Father Anastasius took LaSalle's hand in his and spoke words of comfort and hope into his ears, feeling in the pressure of the hand a faint response. This too would be called a confession.

LaSalle's character is thus given by Bancroft: "For force of will, and vast conceptions—for various knowledge, and quick adaptation of his genius to untried circumstances—for a sublime magnanimity, that resigned itself to the will of Heaven, and yet triumphed over affliction by energy of purpose and unfaltering hope—he had no superior among his countrymen. He had won the affection of the Governor of Canada, the esteem of Colbert, the confidence of Seignelay, the favor of Louis XIV. After beginning the colonization of Upper Canada, he perfected the discovery of the Mississippi, from the Falls of St. Anthony to its mouth; and he will be remembered through all time, as the father of colonization in the great central valley of the west."<sup>5</sup> Immediately after the melancholy termination of the labors of this great man, his assassins undertook the command of the expedition; and, as might be expected their first exercise of authority was to seize on the treasury and provisions, which were estimated to be worth about fifty thousand francs. Soon however disputes arose among them; two of them fell victims to the violence of their guilty accomplices, and the rest are supposed to have remained among some of the Indian tribes. Those who remained faithful pursued their journey under the leadership of LaSalle's brother, the Sulpician Cavelier, and the Recollet Father Anastasius, until the 20th of July, when they arrived among the Arkansas, where they met with two of their countrymen, in the vicinity of the river of that name. After a short delay, they ascended the Mississippi to the mouth of the Illinois River, which they entered on the 3rd of September, and on the 11th of the same month arrived at Fort St. Louis, on Lake Peoria. De Tonti was absent on a military expedition against the Seneca Indians, under the command of Governor de Nonville. The Jesuit Father Allouez, who had attended the Kaskaskia mission for the last year or more, now departed for Mackinac. Here, on Peoria Lake the remnants of LaSalle's expedition passed the winter, and on

4 Narrative of Father Douay in J. G. Shea's "Discovery and Exploration in the Mississippi Valley, p. 218.

5 "History of the United States," 1854, vol. III, p. 173.

the opening of spring continued their journey to Quebec, where, shortly after their arrival, they took shipping for France. No further attempts to complete the discovery of the Mississippi appear to have been made by the French Government until the year 1697, when two ships, under the command of Lemoine D'Iberville and Chateamoraud, were fitted out for that purpose. They set sail on the 17th of October 1698 and on the 12th of January 1699 came in sight of the coast of Florida. Shortly afterwards Lemoine D'Iberville sailed for the Mississippi, which he entered on the 2nd of March and ascended as far as the present site of Donaldsonville and founded the Colony of Rosalie near the site of the City of Natchez. In 1718 his brother Bienville completed the peaceful conquest of Louisiana by the foundation of the great emporium of the South, New Orleans. This rapid review represents in rough outlines the national background for the rising Church of God in the vast territory of the Mississippi and its tributaries. The progress of religion is slow and laborious. The immediate results are not great, as far as the records show. Yet missionary activities had accompanied the entire voyage of LaSalle from Fort Frontenac to the mouth of the Mississippi; for as we have seen, Father Zenobe Mambre never let an occasion pass by without an appeal to the *anima naturaliter christiane*, that he recognized in every savage he met. Father Gabriel Ribourde sealed his glowing zeal for the salvation of souls by martyrdom. Father Hennepin, after his deliverance from captivity by Du Lhuth, returned to Green Bay by way of the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers. In the following year he sailed for Europe and, at the convent of his order at St. Germaine-en-Laye, wrote his first book, the *Louisiana*. The name of Father Louis Hennepin has been clouded with the charge that he was a dreadful liar. Mr. Parkman has expressed the current opinion of him by saying: "His books have their value with all their enormous fabrications. Could he have contented himself with telling the truth, his name would have stood high as a bold and vigorous discoverer."<sup>6</sup>

Father Hennepin's character, in no other respect, has been impeached; and while in America, he bore the reputation of a fearless, circumspect, and self-denying priest. When stationed in Canada he would start out in the depth of winter with a little chapel service on his back, and travel twenty or thirty leagues on snow shoes, that he might baptize dying Indians and harden himself for his rough pioneer work. With two companions he explored, in 1680, the Mississippi River north from the mouth of the Illinois River, discovered the Falls of St. Anthony and wrote the earliest book of travels on the Northwest. The general truthfulness of this book the *Louisiana* has never been questioned; and its popularity has exceeded that of all other contemporary publications relating to North America. May there

---

<sup>6</sup> Parkman, "LaSalle and the Great West," p. 137.

not be some mistake in the severe judgment which has been passed upon the character of Father Hennepin? That there were falsehoods and frauds in later publications which bore his name is true; but what part of the culpability for those frauds, if any, rests upon him, is a question which needs a new and careful investigation. Some of them are too glaring to have any appeal to a man of sense, such as Hennepin certainly was.

One of the earliest, in some respect, the very earliest settlement of whites on the Mississippi River is the Post of Arkansas. LaSalle on his first voyage of discovery and conquest in 1682 made a grant of land on the Arkansas River to his ever-faithful lieutenant, Henri De Tonti. In 1686 Tonti took possession of his seigniority and built a log house, surrounded by palisades and left ten men to begin a settlement. This was the origin of Arkansas Post. The Post was still occupied when the survivors of LaSalle's party reached the place from Texas. In 1698 he once more visited this fort in company of the Gentlemen of the Seminary of Quebec, Montigny, St. Cosme and Davion. In 1689 Tonti had made a grant of a tract of land in his seigniority to the Jesuits for the purpose of establishing a mission, promising to build a house and chapel for the missionaries. He also agreed to support a missionary for three years. The missionaries were to erect a cross fifteen feet high, instruct the Indians, encourage agriculture and say a mass for Tonti on St. Henry's day.

After the death of Tonti, John Law, the "great financier", received a grant of twelve square miles near the Post of Arkansas. The Post itself was still maintained when Charlevoix visited the place in 1721. It was stipulated that the proprietor of the new colony should settle fifteen hundred Germans on the lands that had been granted to him, and that he should keep up, at his own expense, a body of infantry and cavalry sufficient to protect the colonists against the attacks of Indians. In the month of March 1721 two hundred immigrants arrived in the colony. But when they heard of Law's failure and disgrace they returned to New Orleans and demanded to be sent back to their Alsatian homes. But they were prevailed upon to stay. Large tracts of land were granted to them on the Mississippi, thirty miles above New Orleans, at the place that still bears the name of "German Coast."

The first priest at the Post of Arkansas was the Jesuit du Poisson who came as missionary to the Indians and chaplain to the garrison 1727. As there was neither chapel nor house, the priest accepted the hospitality of the Commandant. "In 1729, on his way to New Orleans," as Father Watrin relates, "he stopped over at the village of the Natchez, on the very day which they had chosen for slaughtering the French, and was included in the general massacre. This conspiracy may well be compared to the Sicilian Vespers. The French established at that post treated with the utmost insolence the nation of the Natchez, the most useful and

the most devoted to the colony; and they in turn undertook to avenge themselves. Father du Poisson had been requested to remain one day for some ministerial function which presented itself, in the absence of the curé; he consented to do it, and was the victim of his devotion and his charity."<sup>7</sup> The entire country in the neighborhood was, for a long time, in a disturbed condition, so that the place of Father du Poisson could not be filled. As Father Watrin in his letter on the Banishment of the Jesuits, records, "one month afterward, the Yazous, another savage nation, having entered into the same conspiracy, also slew the French who lived near them. Father Souel, their missionary, was not spared; he was so beloved by the negro who served him that his faithful slave was killed in trying to defend or avenge his master. About the same time, Father D'Outreleau descended with several voyageurs from the Illinois country, for the affairs of the mission, and halted upon the banks of the Mississippi, to say mass. A band of these same Yazous, who had killed Father Souel, arrived at the same place, with other savages, their allies; they watched the time when the French, and especially the Father, were occupied with the holy sacrifice, and they fired a volley from their guns, which killed some Frenchmen and wounded others. Father D'Outreleau received a wound in the arm and several grains of coarse shot in his mouth; it was regarded as a very remarkable effect of God's protection that he was only slightly wounded. This disaster did not dismay him; his firmness reassured his fellow-travelers, and they escaped the savages and proceeded to New Orleans. Soon afterward, it was a question of avenging upon the barbarians the deaths of the French, especially of all those who had perished among the Natchez; an army was sent thither, of which Father D'Outreleau was the chaplain, and in that employ he always conducted himself in the same resolute manner."<sup>8</sup> There must have been Jesuit missionaries at the Post of Arkansas up to 1763, when Father Carette was forced to leave it by the contempt of all religion displayed by the officers and soldiers of the garrison. As there was no chapel nor house for the priest, mass had to be said in the mess-room of the Fort, a place made still more unsuitable by the rude manners and freedom of language boldly manifested by almost all. Soon after that, the Post of Arkansas received a Spanish Commandant. The Indians around the Post were called Quappas or Kappas. Remnants of them continued to live on the banks of the Arkansas River as late as Bishop Rosati's time.

---

<sup>7</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 70, p. 247.

<sup>8</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 70, pp. 247-248.

## CHAPTER 4

### ON THE ILLINOIS RIVER

During the time of the construction of Fort Creve Coeur until its destruction and the flight of the Frenchmen under De Tonti two Recollet Fathers, Gabriel Ribourde and Zenobius Mambre, were the representatives of the spiritual order among the French and the Indian Christians on the Illinois. Father Louis Hennepin had asked and received the commission to explore the Mississippi to the North, and he never returned to the Illinois. "The only great Illinois village being composed of seven or eight thousand souls," wrote Father Mambre, "Father Gabriel and I had a sufficient field for the exercise of our zeal besides the few French who soon after came there."<sup>1</sup> In addition to this great village there were a large number of small villages within their jurisdiction; those of the Miamis, the Ottowas, the Kickapoos and Iowas, the Mascoutens and Kaskaskias and Nadowissius. It was a strange mixture of tribes and a wide circuit of territory the Recollets claimed; Yet there was no one there at the time to dispute it with them, though to the north there were a number of Jesuits engaged in the same work. "Father Gabriel and I," says Father Mambre, "devoted ourselves constantly to the mission." An Illinois named Asapieta adopted Father Gabriel as his son, so that the good Father found in his cabin a subsistence in the Indian fashion. "As wine failed for the celebration of the divine mysteries, we found means, towards the close of August, to get wild grapes which began to ripen, and we made very good wine."<sup>2</sup> With regard to conversions Father Mambre is rather pessimistic: "During the whole time Father Gabriel unraveled their language a little, and I spoke so as to make myself understood by the Indians; but there is in these savages such an alienation from the Faith, so brutal and narrow a mind, such corrupt and anti-christian morals, that great time would be needed to hope for any fruit. It is true, I found many of quite docile character"<sup>3</sup> "During the summer we followed the Indians in their camps, and to the chase. I also made a voyage to the Miamis, to learn something about their disposition; thence I went to visit other villages of Illinois, all however, with no great success."<sup>4</sup>

Whilst all seemed quiet and peaceful, Father Mambre living in the Indian village, Father Gabriel Ribourde in the Fort, and M. De

---

<sup>1</sup> "Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley," by John Gilmary Shea, (2nd Ed.) p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> "Discovery and Exploration," p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> "Discovery and Exploration," p. 157.

<sup>4</sup> "Discovery and Exploration," p. 157.

Tonti busily engaged in completing the Fort of St. Louis on the rock higher up the river, there came the warning: the Iroquois are coming. All was confusion in the village, and Fort Creve Coeur was in ruins. The brave Tonti sought to bring about a cessation of hostilities. He approached the invaders holding up a bead necklace as a sign of peace. He did not succeed to calm the bloodthirsty spirits on both sides. The Iroquois chief who had interposed between Tonti and a murderous youth who had stabbed him, now took the peacemaker by the arm and told him to go. Tonti gathered around him the two priests and the few remaining Frenchmen and started in an old canoe for the north. On this journey Father Gabriel Ribourde<sup>5</sup> fell a victim of his zeal and piety, by the hand of a Kickapoo. Father Mambre returned to the Illinois village in due time intent upon making the voyage of discovery down the Mississippi to the Gulf with LaSalle and Tonti and to return with them to the Illinois in 1682. But LaSalle and Tonti and Mambre also were detained for the winter on the Rock of the Illinois, which was now crowned with the Fort St. Louis. There was a chapel in the fort, where Father Mambre said mass for the French until the departure of LaSalle for Quebec and Paris. Tonty remained behind as commandant. It was now that the Jesuit Fathers came into their own once more. Father Allouez had kept his promise, though his coming was belated. When he arrived is stated nowhere. But the fact of his presence is certain. Joutel, in his book on "M de LaSalle's Second Voyage" states on two occasions that the Jesuit Father Allouez was at Fort St. Louis among the Kaskaskia as late as March 1688. He was sick at the time, when the companions of LaSalle's second voyage Father Cavelier, Mambre and M. Joutel visited him. Father Allouez soon after this visit, left the place for Mackinac, where there was a residence of three Jesuit missionaries.

Father Allouez's immediate successor in the Illinois mission was the Apostle of the Abnakis, Father Sebastian Rale, who spent two years, 1692 to 1694, along the Illinois River. In Kaskaskia, then a village of three hundred wigwams, he received a hearty welcome. The missionary was delighted. "The most skilful European, after much thoughtful study," he said, "could not produce a more pertinent or beautiful discourse" than the head-sachem who addressed him. In his two

---

<sup>5</sup> Father Ribourde was a scion of one of the noble houses of Burgundy. He was among the first Recollets to come to Canada in the summer of 1670. He had been Father Confessor to Count Frontenac. The date of his death is September 9, 1680. He was then in the seventieth year of his age, forty of which has been spent in the religious state.

<sup>6</sup> "Sebastian Rale" by Couvers Francis, D. D., in "Spark's American Biography, new series, vol. VIII, p. 178, Father Rale's letters may be found in "Early Jesuit Missions in North America," by the Rev. William Ingraham Kip, as well as in the "Jesuit Relations."

letters Father Rale gives many interesting notices of Indian life at that place. The dance was an expression of both sorrow and joy. To be a good hunter was much, but to be a good warrior was more. It was a high honor to return home laden with many scalps. Torturing the prisoners of war was common among them. Polygamy made the men averse to the teachings of the Father, although they did not object to having their wives and children attend instructions, and being baptized. About 1687 Father Rasles, as the name is sometimes written, was recalled to the Abnaki Mission in Maine where he met his death at the hands of English soldiers. Father James Gravier, who had visited the Illinois Mission as early as 1687 received it from Father Rale. He erected a chapel within Fort St. Louis on the Rock of the Illinois. His Relation of the occurrences at the Mission of the Immaculate Conception of the Illinois from March 20th, 1693, to February 15th, 1694, presents an interesting view of his toils and trials among these Indians. Yet, nothing daunted by the insurmountable obstacles placed in his way, he continued with indefatigable zeal to instruct the ignorant, heal the sick, warn the wayward and curb the proud. As to the educational methods pursued by the missionaries, Father Gravier, the Superior, gives us an interesting explanation: "To the adults I explained the whole of the New Testament, of which I have copper plate engravings representing perfectly what is related on each page."<sup>7</sup> The grace of God was slowly but surely making its way in ever widening circles. "What surprised me most," writes the Father, "is the assiduous perseverance of the young men. The most arrogant became like children at Catechism. When the young men are in the lodges of their chiefs, they sing, night and day, chants that instruct them and keep them occupied."<sup>8</sup> Yet the Peorias were holding back, their chief being one of the most impudent jugglers. The Mission of the Immaculate Conception among the Illinois founded by Marquette in 1675, had its center in the shadow of Fort St. Louis on the Rock of the Illinois, also called Starved Rock. This is near the site of the present city of Ottawa. Twenty years later it was at the village of the Peorias, where the Illinois River emerges from the Lake of Peoria through a narrow rocky channel called the Strait. All the Indians living between these two points and in all the surrounding country were considered members of the Mission. Many of them however refused the missionary's teachings and remained addicted to their manitous and their vaunted free life. For a long time, Father Gravier's patient zeal produced but slight results. At last there came a chance for the better. The great chief of the Kaskaskia tribe, Rouensa by name, whilst still a pagan wished to marry his daughter who was

---

<sup>7</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 64, p. 227.

<sup>8</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 64, p. 231. "Juggler" is Father Gravier's designation for a medicine-man.

a Christian, to a profligate French trader residing at the village. The girl asked the missionary's advice, and was by him confirmed in her resolution not to marry. The chief grew indignant, and sought to force his daughter into the marriage. At last the poor creature told the missionary, that in view of the good that might result for religion from her sacrifice through the conversion of her father and her husband, she would give her consent to marry the Frenchman. Father Gravier had no more to say.<sup>9</sup>

What the girl had hoped and prayed for really came to pass. In a short time Chief Rouensa humbly asked to be baptized; and from that time on he showed himself as devoted a Christian as he had formerly been an enemy of the Cross. He attended the instructions and the services in the chapel with the greatest interest and exhorted all the people under his immediate charge to do the same. And even beyond his jurisdiction among the Peorias, and the scattered members of the other Illinois nation he used his influence for good. Not content with this, he made public profession of faith at a solemn festival which was attended by all the leading men of the Peorias and Kaskaskia. The Peorias took umbrage at what was said and done, saying: "The Father's fables are good only in his own country; we have ours which do not make us die as his do. "The daughter also of the Kaskaskia chief," wrote Father Gravier, "exerted great influence in favor of religion among the women of the tribe. The first conquest she made for God was to win her husband, who was notorious in the Illinois country for his debaucheries. I am ashamed," said he, "that a savage child should know more than I, who have been born and brought up in the Christian religion, and that she should speak to me of the love of God with a gentleness and tenderness capable of making the most insensible weep." This good girl displayed admirable care in getting the children and young girls of the village baptized. When Father Gravier asked her why she was so desirous of teaching the children, she replied, "that it was because God specially loved them, and that their souls still retained the beauty they had received in Baptism."<sup>10</sup> These are some of Father Gravier's encomiums pronounced on this little saint of the Kaskaskias.

Up to this date, 1698, there may have been some talk among the Kaskaskia of severing their connection with the recalcitrant Peorias. But the plan never could take definite shape as long as Father Gravier was on guard. Spiritually, however, the chasm between them grew wider and deeper, as the years passed on. Yet, there were Christians among the Peorias as there were pagans among the Kaskaskia, and scoffers among all the tribes; in tone and practice, the Kaskaskia alone

---

<sup>9</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 64, 159 ss.

<sup>10</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 64, *passim*.

were a Catholic tribe. Father Gravier was anxious to keep them all together in the same mission because he hoped the good example of the one would at last overcome the evil propensities of the others. His successor, probably, was of a different opinion: So, it seems, the religious indifference and persecuting spirit of the Peorias was one of the contributing causes of the exodus of the Kaskaskia from their ancient homes on the Illinois.

When Father Marest arrived in the Illinois country in 1698, to continue the good work of Father Gravier, he wrote to a Father of his Society: "The state of religion here is as follows: but few among the men embrace Christianity; the young men especially live in excessive licentiousness, which renders them incapable of listening to the missionaries. The women and girls are very well disposed to receive baptism; They are constant and firm when once they have received it; they are fervent in prayer, and ask only to be instructed; they frequently approach the sacraments and, finally, are capable of highest sanctity. The number of those who embrace our holy religion increases daily to a marked degree—so much so that we have been obliged to build a new church, and judging from the manner in which this one is filled every day I think we shall shortly need a third....The children give us bright hopes for the future. When they return from instructions to their cabins they tell their fathers what they have learned."<sup>11</sup> Here is a description of the life we lead," wrote the good priest in his letter from the Illinois country in New France under date of the 29th of April 1699, "Every day, before sunrise, we say mass for the convenience of our Christians who go from it to their work. The savages chant their prayers or recite them together during mass, after which we disperse in different directions to teach the children the Catechism. After that we visit the sick. On our return, we always find several savages who come to consult us on various matters. Saturdays and Sundays are completely occupied in hearing confessions."<sup>12</sup> As Father Gravier was called away from the mission by his official duties as Superior and Vicar General, two distinguished men came to aid Father Marest. Father Julian Binneteau arrived at the Peoria village in 1697, in company of Father Francis Pinet, the founder of the Mission of the Guardian Angel within the bounds of the present city of Chicago, 1696. As Father Pinet had been dispossessed by LaSalle of this mission, he went to the Tamarois, who had joined the Cahokia on the bottom lands opposite the site of the future city of St. Louis.

Father Gravier wrote to the venerable Bishop Laval a few words of protest against the action of LaSalle, and the threats of Count

---

<sup>11</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 65, p. 81.

<sup>12</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 65, p. 81 s.

Frontenac: "Nothing has more comforted me, Monseigneur, than the kind manner which Your Grace was pleased to manifest to me. If Monseigneur of Quebec, (Bishop Vallier) has the same sentiment for us, we all hope we shall perform our duties in our Ottawa missions more peacefully than we have done for some years. We shall also be safe from the threats of M. the Count de Frontenac, to drive us from our Mission as he had already done from that of the Angel Guardian of the Miamis, at Chicagwa, the charge of which Monseigneur of Quebec had confided to me, confirming the powers that Your Grace had conferred upon Father Marquette and Father Allouez, who were the first missionaries of those southern nations, namely the Illinois, Miamis and Sioux. If M. the Count of Frontenac had learned that in our Missions we had done anything unworthy of our ministry, he could easily have applied to Monseigneur the Bishop, or his Grand Vicar. But he could not otherwise than by violence drive us from our mission. We hope that Monseigneur of Quebec will not suffer such violence."<sup>13</sup>

Father Binneteau in 1699, gives an account of the virtuous womanhood among the Illinois. "The women and girls have strong inclinations to virtue, although according to custom they are the slaves of their brothers, who compel them to marry whomsoever they choose. There are many households where husband and wife live in great fervor, without heeding what the jugglers or the young libertines say. There are some women married to some of our Frenchmen, who would be a good example to the best regulated household in France." The good old Father also gives high praise to his companion in the mission, lately arrived. "Father Gabriel Marest is doing wonders: he has the best talent in the world for these missions. He has learned the language in four or five months, he can bear an incredible amount of fatigue, and his zeal leads him to look upon the most difficult things as trifles. 'I will never rest,' he says, 'as long as I live.' From morning until night our house is never empty of people who come to be instructed and to confess. We had to enlarge our chapels."<sup>14</sup>

In January 1699, Father Binneteau, now again at the mission near Peoria Lake, recalls his journey of the previous year: "I am at present spending the winter with a portion of our savages who are scattered about, I have recently been with the Tamarois, to visit a band of them on the bank of one of the largest rivers in the world—which, for this reason, we call the Mississippi, or 'the Great River.' More than seven hundred leagues of it have been found to be navigable, without

<sup>13</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 65, p. 53.

<sup>14</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 65, p. 69.

discovering its source. I am to return to the Illinois of Tamarois in the spring."<sup>15</sup>

Both Binneteau and Pinet made this journey, and claimed the Tamarois mission as their own. The Seminary priests were greatly surprised: but a temporary arrangement was made: Father Pinet the Jesuit was to have charge of the Indians, whilst Father Bergier, one of the Seminary priests, held charge of the French in the place. Father Binneteau now returned to the mission on Peoria Lake, to resume his usual round of visits to the scattered neophytes on the praires adjoining the Illinois River. To follow the Indians in their excursions was one of the severest trials of the missionary. The summer hunt was especially fatiguing, says Father Marest; "it cost the life of the late Father Binneteau. He accompanied the savages in the greatest heat of the month of July; sometimes he was in danger of smothering amid the grass, which was extremely high; sometimes he suffered cruelly from thirst. By day he was drenched with perspiration and at night he was obliged to sleep on the ground. These hardships brought upon him a violent sickness, from which he expired in my arms."<sup>16</sup> When death came Father Marest does not tell. But from other sources it appears that Father Binneteau lingered on throughout the fall of the year 1799. "Father Binneteau died from exhaustion," writes Father Gravier, "but if he had a few drops of Spanish wine, for which he asked us during his last illness, or had we been able to procure some fresh food for him, he would perhaps be still alive."<sup>17</sup> According to Rochemonteix, Father Binneteau died on the eve of Christmas 1699, at the Kaskaskia Village on Peoria Lake, and was buried there by his companions Marest and Pinet, of whom Father Gravier said on this occasion. "Father Pinet and Father Marest are wearing out their strength; and they are two saints, who take pleasure of being deprived of everything, in order, as they say, that they may soon be nearer to Paradise."<sup>18</sup> But there was much work still awaiting the two heroic souls: Father Marest to prepare the great exodus of the Kaskaskias to the Mississippi, and Father Pinet to await them at Tamarois.

---

<sup>15</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 65, p. 71. The name is sometimes spelled, and always pronounced Tamaroa.

<sup>16</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 66, p. 253.

<sup>17</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 66, p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 66, p. 37.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE GENTLEMEN OF THE SEMINARY OF QUEBEC

The earliest missionaries among the Indians of Canada and on the great lakes depended for their authority directly on the Holy See. They were the Greyrobes or Recollets and the Blackrobes or Jesuits. When Canada came under British rule for the first time (1629-1634) most of the priests withdrew to France, and when England restored the province to France, only the Jesuits returned to their former posts; the Recollets being debarred until August 18, 1670, as a counter balance to the Jesuits. The Sulpicians arrived somewhat later when all Canada was subject to the Bishop of Rouen, in Normandy. These were the religious Orders that took part in the earliest movements to conquer the Mississippi Valley for Christ. Now in 1694 we see another company of missionaries hurrying over the same route that had brought the Recollets with LaSalle down the Mississippi to the further-most point that had been reached by Marquette: They are usually called the Gentlemen of the Seminary, or the Seminary Priests, officially, the Society of Foreign Missions of the Seminary of Quebec. They were Fathers Francis Joliet de Montigny, Antoine Davion, Jean Francois Buisson de St. Cosme, a native of Canada. De Montigny was the Vicar-General of the party. Dominic Anthony Thaurer de la Source<sup>1</sup> was, like the younger St. Cosme, no priest, but a companion of the voyage, who wrote an account of the events he had witnessed in 1719. He returned to Quebec and resumed his studies and later on joined the mission at Cahokia. The party had the usual complement of voyageurs and *coureurs de bois*, twenty persons in all. Father John Bergier was not of Montigny's party, although a priest of the Seminary of Quebec. He probably reached the Tamarois before the advent of his fellow priests, who were delayed by the Indians of the Fox River. This missionary expedition was sent out by the first Bishop of Quebec, Francois Laval de Montmorency, commonly called Bishop Laval, who had been appointed in 1657, and had resigned in 1674. But owing to the troubles of his successor, Bishop Vallier, with the English as well as with the French governments, he was forced to resume the reins once more in Vallier's place. Having founded the Seminary of Quebec, Bishop Laval always manifested a deep interest in its varying fortunes. Thus it came about that the three Gentlemen of the Seminary were sent to the Mississippi. At Mackinac they had the good fortune to meet with the Sieur de Tonti, the ever-faithful friend of LaSalle, who quickly came to the resolution

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. U. E. Dionne, Gabriel Richard, Quebec, 1911. Notes at end.

to accompany them as far as the Arkansas. St. Cosme in his letter<sup>2</sup> addressed "to the Bishop," expresses the heartfelt gratitude for De Tonti's services to the priests: "He has not only done the duty of a brave man, but also discharged the functions of a zealous missionary."<sup>3</sup>

In the mission of St. Ignace at Mackinac the new missionaries were kindly received by the Jesuits Gravier and Careil, being charmed with the good judgment, the zeal and modesty of M. de Montigny, St. Cosme and M. Davion.<sup>4</sup> With kindly instructions to Father Pinet and Father Binneteau at the Illinois, they departed down the western shore of Lake Michigan. Owing to bad weather the three gentlemen from the Seminary landed a few miles north of the Mission of the Angel Guardian and, leaving the rest of the company by the lake-shore, made their way on foot to the home of Father Francis Pinet. From here on Father St. Cosme is the spokesman of the party: "Many travelers have already been wrecked there," he writes. "We, M. de Montigny, Davion, and myself, went by land to the house of the Reverend Jesuit Fathers, while our people remained behind. We found there Reverend Father Pinet, and Reverend Father Binneteau, who had recently arrived from the Illinois country and was slightly ill."<sup>5</sup> The joy of priests meeting priests in the deep solitude of earliest Chicago, was great and sincere. "I cannot describe to you, my lord, with what cordiality and manifestations of friendship these Reverend Fathers received and embraced us, while we had the consolation of residing with them,"<sup>6</sup> wrote Father St. Cosme, and then proceeded to give a clear and succinct description of the place: "Their house is built on the bank of a small river, with the lake on one side and a fine and vast prairie on the other. The village of the savages contains over a hundred and fifty cabins, and a league up the river is still another village almost as large. They are all Miamis. Reverend Father Pinet usually resides there except in the winter, when the savages are all engaged in hunting, and then he goes to the Illinois. We saw no savages there. They had already started for their hunt. If one may judge of the future from the short time Father Pinet has passed in this mission, we may believe that, if God will bless the labors and the

---

<sup>2</sup> The letter of St. Cosme, from which almost all the facts narrated in this chapter are taken, lay hidden for 160 years among the literary treasures of Laval University, Quebec, and was discovered in the middle of the 19th century by the great Catholic Historian John Gilmary Shea. It was published by him in French and English, New York, 1861. It was republished in Shea's "Early Voyages Up and Down the Mississippi," and with some corrections in Louise Phelps Kellogg's "Early Narratives of the North-West, 1634-1699." We follow the later edition.

<sup>3</sup> Kellogg, p. 343.

<sup>4</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 65, p. 59.

<sup>5</sup> Kellogg, p. 346.

<sup>6</sup> Kellogg, p. 346.

zeal of the holy missionary, there will be a great number of good and fervent Christians. It is true, that but slight results are obtained with reference to the older persons, who are hardened in profligacy, but all the children are baptized, and the jugglers even, who are the most opposed to Christianity, allow their children to be baptized. They are also very glad to let them be instructed. Several girls of a certain age, and also many young boys have already been and are being instructed, so that we may hope that, when the old stock dies off, they will be a new and entirely Christian people.”<sup>7</sup> The entire party left Chicago for the Illinois country, but a part of their belongings had to remain behind in care of Brother Alexander and Father Pinet’s servant. When they came to the portage of the Kankakee River, the party was divided by an untoward circumstance, as recorded by Father St. Cosme. “Messieurs de Montigny, De Tonti, and Davion continued the portage on the following day, while I, St. Cosme with four other men, went back to look for the little boy, (who had wandered away into the prairie). While retracing my steps, I met Father Pinet and Binneteau, who were on the way to the Illinois with two Frenchmen and a savage. We looked for the boy during the whole of that day also, without finding him.”<sup>8</sup> “We arrived on the 15th of November at the place called the Old Fort. This is a rock on the bank of the river, about a hundred feet high, whereon Monsieur de LaSalle had caused a fort to be built, which had been abandoned, because the savages went to reside about twenty-five leagues further down. We slept a league above it, where we found two cabins of savages; we were consoled on finding a woman who was a thoroughly good Christian. The distance between Chicagou and the fort is considered to be about thirty leagues. There we commenced the navigation, that continues to be always good as far as the fort of Permetaoi,<sup>9</sup> where the savages now are and which we reached on the 19th of November. We found there Reverend Father Binneteau and Reverend Father Marest who, owing to their not being laden when they left Chicagou, had arrived six or seven days before us. We also saw Reverend Father Pinet there. All the Reverend Jesuit Fathers gave us the best possible reception. Their sole regret was to see us compelled to leave so soon on account of the frost. We took there a Frenchman who had lived three years with the Acansas and who knows a little of their language.” Father St. Cosme had but words of the highest praise for the Jesuit Fathers: “This Mission of the Illinois seems to me the finest that the Reverend Jesuit Fathers have up here, for without counting all the children who are baptized, a number of adults have abandoned all their superstitions and live as thoroughly

---

<sup>7</sup> Kellogg, p. 347.

<sup>8</sup> Kellogg, p. 348.

<sup>9</sup> A Fort on Lake Peoria, the early name of this lake was Pimetoui.

good Christians; they frequently attend the sacraments and are married in church. We had not the consolation of seeing all these good Christians often, for they were all scattered down the bank of the river for the purpose of hunting. We saw only some women savages married to Frenchmen who edified us by their modesty and their assiduity in going to prayer several times a day in the chapel. We chanted High Mass in it, with deacon and sub-deacon, on the feast of the Presentation of the most Blessed Virgin, and after commending our voyage to her and having placed ourselves under her protection, we left the Illinois on the 22nd of November—we had to break the ice for two or three arpents to get out of Lake Permetaoi. We had four canoes; that of Monsieur De Tonti, our two, and another belonging to five young voyageurs who were glad to accompany us, partly on account of Monsieur De Tonti, who is universally beloved by all the voyageurs, and partly also to see the country. Reverend Fathers Binneteau and Pinet also came with us a part of the way, as they wished to go and spend the whole winter with their savages.”<sup>10</sup> Their last act of kindness to the Missionaries was a very practical one: Father Marest writes: “As these gentlemen did not know the Illinois language, we gave them a collection of prayers and a translation of the Catechism, with the notes that we have been able to make upon that language.”<sup>11</sup>

On the first day of their voyage the party came to the cabin of the Great Chief of the Kaskaskias, Rouensa, who with his whole family received Holy Communion at Father Montigny’s mass. From Rouensa they heard of the recent attack made by the Chouanons and Chicasaws on a hunting party of the Cahokia Indians, an Illinois tribe with its chief village on the Mississippi below the Missouri. When later on the party visited that village some old men came to meet them, weeping for the death of their people killed by the Chouanons who, as they charged, had been furnished with fire-arms by Tonti. Tonti tried to convince them of his innocence in this matter, but not succeeding, led an immediate retreat to a place about ten miles down the stream. The following day they were detained for some hours owing to quantities of drifting ice in the river, and on the 28th of November they landed at a village governed by a woman chief. The priests said mass the following morning in the cabin of a soldier named La Violette, who was married to a savage, and whose child Father de Montigny baptized. Leaving this village the party spent four days in accomplishing about twenty miles. On the Feast of St. Xavier, December 3rd, a heavy gale broke up the ice and they embarked once more, and on December 5th, they reached the mouth of the Illinois River. On the next day they began their voyage on the mighty Father of Waters. Soon they

<sup>10</sup> Kellogg, pp. 350, 351.

<sup>11</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” vol. 65, p. 281.

passed the mouth of the great River of the Missouri, the vastness and muddiness of whose waters they could not help to note. "It is reported," Father St. Cosme wrote, "that there are great numbers of savages on the upper reaches of that river."<sup>12</sup> They also marvelled at the strange images on the rock above Alton. On the 7th day of December they reached Cahokia, where the chief with some of his people met the visitors on the water edge, and invited them to his villages inhabited by another tribe of the Illinois, and also having a colony of French traders and hunters. The Cahokias had been harrassed lately by war-parties of Shawnees and Chicasaws and were in consequence rather suspicious of the newcomers' intentions. Tonti went there with the chief, but the Fathers, wishing to prepare for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, camped on the other side of the river on the site of the future metropolis of the Mississippi Valley, the city of St. Louis. The following morning Father Montigny, Davion and St. Cosme each said mass on a stone altar they had prepared on the high river-bank, probably at the foot of Arsenal Street. It was the great Feastday of the Immaculate Mother of God, in whose honor Father Marquette had bestowed her most glorious title on the great river he had discovered. "Every Missourian, and especially every St. Louisian" says Father Garraghan, "will look back in a spirit of solemn pride on that memorable day when the site that was to see the growth of the first city of the State passed from out the night of prehistoric darkness into the clear sunshine of recorded history;" the 8th day of December 1698, "the day of the three masses."<sup>13</sup> On the 9th the whole company visited the village of the Tamarois. They were received with every mark of respect and wonder. How large the tribe really was could not be learnt. Father St. Cosme thought there were very many of them. "There would be enough," says he, "for a rather fine mission, by bringing to it the Kaskaskias, who live quite near, and the Meehigamias, who live a little lower down the Mississippi."<sup>14</sup> These three tribes were found to speak the Illinois language. On the 25th of November the Seminary priests had parted from Father Pinet who was to spend the winter with the Tamarois, to make a visit to that tribe assembled on the island lower than the village.

Leaving the Tamarois on the afternoon of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception the missionaries departed and for more than three days saw nothing worthy of notice save a solitary hill at a distance of about three arpents on the right side going down. Father St. Cosme further says, that they were detained on December 11th,

---

<sup>12</sup> Kellogg, p. 355.

<sup>13</sup> Garraghan, Gilbert J., S. J., "Some High Lights in Missouri History," "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, p. 234.

<sup>14</sup> Kellogg, p. 356.

1698 by rain. This, of course, signifies that the party was forced to camp nearby, a circumstance that would account for the fact that the name Saint Cosme remains attached to the spot. The hill of which the missionary speaks is still known as Cape Saint Cosme; and the name of the Creek that washes that part of the hill, Cinque Hommes Creek, is but a late corruption of the name of its discoverer, Saint Cosme.<sup>15</sup> Early in the morning of the 12th of December they arrived at Cape Saint Antoine, a rocky bluff on the left bank going down, now known as Fountain Bluff. Some arpents below there is another rock on the right bank, which projects into the river and towards an island or rather a rock about one hundred feet high, which makes the river turn very short, and narrows the channel, causing a whirlpool on which, it is said, canoes are lost during high water. This has caused the spot to be dreaded by the savages, who are in the habit of offering sacrifices to that rock when they pass.<sup>16</sup> This is now, called Grand Tower. It was here that one of the usual great ceremonies of raising the Cross of Christ was performed by the missionaries, as Father Saint Cosme tells us: "We ascended this island or rock with some difficulty by a hill and we planted a fine cross on it chanting the hymn *Vexilla Regis*, while our people fired three discharges of their guns. God grant that the Cross that has never yet been known in this place, may triumph here, and that our Lord may abundantly spread the merits of His Holy Passion, so that all these savages may know and serve Him."<sup>17</sup> Father Saint Cosme's prayer was answered in a manner he may not have thought of at the time, but more fully than he had anticipated. For almost within sight of one standing by that cross, the Seminary of St. Mary of the Barrens was to rise in the distant future and send out, year by year, new bands of youthful messengers of the Gospel into the benighted world around.

The missionaries left Cape Saint Antoine on the 14th of December, passed the mouth of the Ohio on the 16th, and on the

---

<sup>15</sup> The correct spelling of the word is Cinq Hommes, but the correct name is St. Cosme, pronounced Saint Come. Cf. "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, p. 301.

<sup>16</sup> The "Grand Tower" was described by Schoolcraft in his Journal of a Voyage up the Mississippi River from the mouth of the Ohio to St. Louis, started July 1, 1818; "Grand Tower is a stupendous pile of rocks, rising out of the river, nearly midway in the stream, of a form nearly circular and rising somewhat in the shape of a cone, to the height of about 150 feet, and capped by a stunted growth of cedars. It seems in connection with the rock-shores on either side, to have at some former period, a barrier to the progress of the Mississippi, which must here have had a perpendicular base of more than 100 feet. By some convulsion of nature, or the continued power of friction, acting for centuries upon the lime-stone rock the Mississippi has forced its way through that barrier, leaving the Grand Tower as a perpetual monument of that sublime physical revolution." Journal, p. 229 and 230.

<sup>17</sup> Kellogg, p. 357.

24th, arrived at their destination among the Arkansas Indians. At midnight they had Solemn High Mass, and during the morning they said their masses, in the afternoon they chanted Vespers. They were greatly surprised to feel and see the earth tremble, the earthquake being rather severe and sharp.<sup>18</sup> The Quappas or Kappas were the first Arkansas tribe they encountered. "These savages" says Saint Cosme, "seem to be of a very kind disposition. Their honesty is extraordinary. Polygamy is not common among them."<sup>19</sup> The missionaries then visited the Tonicas and the Taensas. Father Davion was appointed missionary among the Tonicas, who numbered about two thousand souls. Father Montigny remained for a short while among the Taensas. Father Saint Cosme went up the river to the Tamarois to gain the martyr's crown shortly after his arrival there.<sup>20</sup> Dominic Thamer de la Source, who is not mentioned in the letter of Father Saint Cosme, announced his arrival at the Akankas in company with the Gentlemen of the Seminary and of Father Montigny's intention of sending him to the Tamarois with St. Cosme, that is, a younger brother of Father St. Cosme, not in priestly orders. Charlevoix found him, a missionary priest at Cahokia in 1727.

Father Montigny the leader of the voyage is described by John Gilmary Shea as "impetuous, ardent, but easily discouraged."<sup>21</sup> Of Father Davion the Historian of Louisiana, Gayarre,<sup>22</sup> relates that he had constructed and hung up a pulpit to the trunk of an immense oak, growing on a gentle slope which commanded the river. Back of the tree he had raised a little Gothic chapel, the front part of which was divided by the mighty tree to which it was attached, with two diminutive doors opening into the edifice, on either side of that turn. It was done in imitation of the stone towers which stand like sentinels to guard the entrance to the temple of God. "In the chapel," Gayarre says, "Father Davion kept all the sacred vessels, the holy water and the sacerdotal habiliments. There he used to retire to spend hours in meditation and prayer. In that tabernacle was a small portable altar which, whenever he said mass for the natives, was transported outside, under the oak, where they often met to the

<sup>18</sup> Kellogg, p. 358, a premonition of the devastating earthquake of 1811.

<sup>19</sup> Kellogg, p. 359.

<sup>20</sup> Father St. Cosme after writing his letter from the Arkansas, returned to Cahokia. A few years later on his way down the river, he was murdered by a war-party of Chitimacha Indians. The guilty chiefs were captured and executed by Iberville. Cf. Bernard de la Harpe, "*Journal Historique*," p. 28.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Shea, "*The Church in Colonial Days*," p. 544.

<sup>22</sup> Gayarré, "*History of Louisiana, The French Domination*," vol. I, p. 64.

number of three or four hundred. One day they found him dead at the foot of the altar, still retaining his kneeling position.”<sup>23</sup>

The Jesuits of the Illinois Mission, in their letters, speak with a certain reserve of the purpose and the results of the mission of the Seminary Priests. Gravier thinks they came to take over all the Jesuit missions in the Illinois country. Pinet’s foundation of Cahokia was occupied by Bergier. Gravier’s powers as Vicar-General were withdrawn, as Bergier claimed them. The Seminary priests had really accomplished very little. Even Father Davion abandoned his mission for fear of the English and of the savages, their enemies, although he later on returned to the Tonikas and labored among them for eighteen years. We can sympathize with Father Gravier, when after so many years of hard service he sees his work imperiled by men who were really of good will. “I am convinced” he writes to Father Lamberville in Paris, “that these missions will receive rude shocks. They are beginning to be on a good footing. This caused jealousy in the minds of the Gentlemen of the Foreign Missions, who have come to take them from us.”<sup>24</sup> But time, with its healing balm, gradually restored a better feeling between these men of God engaged in the same glorious work.

---

<sup>23</sup> “History of Louisiana, vol. I, p. 67. According to Father Gravier, Davion seems to have been near death’s door shortly after his arrival. “Monsieur de St. Cosme, who had heard that Monsieur Davion was dying, arrived from the Natchez Mission. Before my departure, they both confirmed the news of the wreck of Father de Limoges,—who, out of all that he possessed, saved only his Chalice and his Crucifix.” “Jesuit Relations,” vol. 65, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” vol. 66, p. 35.

## THE KASKASKIAS ON THE RIVER DES PERES

The year 1700 saw, "the second founder of the Illinois Missions," as Father Marest calls Father James Gravier, embark on a voyage to the mouth of the Mississippi on matters of great importance to his Order and the missions entrusted to his care. The same year also witnessed the secession of the Kaskaskia tribe from that of the Peoria, who together had formed the Mission of the Immaculate Conception of Father Marquette. A fateful year it proved to be to the Tamarois, another branch of the Illinois nation, in as far as the migration of the Kaskaskia drew them along to new homes. Before the year 1700 we find the Kaskaskia on the borders of the Illinois River, either at the Rock of the Illinois or farther south, on lake Peoria; after 1700 they are no longer in their ancient village; and in 1712 we hear of their having been established for some time near the junction of the Okaw River with the Mississippi, on a mission called the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. The missionary who was with them on the Illinois, Father Marest, is with them still.

How did all this come about? And where did the Kaskaskia and Tamarois sojourn during those two or three years that intervened between the first and second Kaskaskia. Father Garraghan S.J. has so clearly and beautifully answered the latter question in his resume of Father Kenny's elaborate argument on "Missouri's earliest settlement and its name," that I cannot forbear giving it entire: "On the north bank of the river De Peres at its junction with the Mississippi, just within the south limits of the city of St. Louis, there existed for a few years subsequent to 1700 a French-Indian settlement, Missouri's earliest growth of civilized life. Hither, in that year, came the Kaskaskia Indians, having moved down from their village on the Illinois River where Marquette, twenty-five years before, had set up among them the first outpost of Christian civilization in the Mississippi Valley. Hither also came the Tamarois, and with them the French from their village on the opposite side of the Mississippi. With the Kaskaskia was their pastor, Gabriel Marest of the Society of Jesus, and with the Tamarois was their pastor also, Francois Pinet, of the same Society, the latter having but recently closed his Miami mission, the earliest religious establishment ever set up within the limits of Chicago. Francois Pinet, Chicago's first resident priest, was likewise one of the group of Jesuit missionaries at the Des Peres settlement to whom belongs the distinction of having been the first resident priest on the site of St. Louis; so early a link of historical association do we discover between the metropolis of

the Great Lakes region and the no less forward-looking metropolis of the Mississippi Valley.

The little French-Indian community at the mouth of the Des Peres, hovers ghostlike for a brief spell over the threshold of Missouri history and then fades utterly from view into the surrounding gloom. Until yesterday, when it lifted its head clear of the mists of myth and legend and took rank as the first patch of civilized life ever laid out on Missouri soil, nothing of it more substantial had endured than a faint memory enshrined in the name of the stream, the Des Peres, or "Fathers' River," along the banks of which it one time nestled."<sup>1</sup>

The account of the exodus of the Kaskaskia and of its final outcome rests upon a number of contemporary documents, chief among them Father James Gravier's letter on the Mission of the Immaculate Conception, 1694, and the same Father's Relation of his Voyage to the Lower Mississippi in 1700, and Father Marest's letters from the Kaskaskia Mission on the Mississippi. All this was well known since the publication of the Jesuit Relations. But it was supposed that the transfer from Kaskaskia the ancient, to Kaskaskia the new, was effected in rapid progression. Weighty proof is now at hand that the migration found an intermediate place of refuge and rest in the Mission of St. Francis Xavier on the west bank of the Mississippi River at the mouth of the once so beautiful stream even now called the River Des Peres.

That there was such a village on the Missouri side is vouched for by Moses Austin, writing in 1796, who states on the authority of the most ancient of the inhabitants, that the first settlement of the country by the French was a place called La Riviere Des Peres, which is situated on the Spanish side of the Mississippi about six miles below where the town of St. Louis now stands."<sup>2</sup> This place was the intermediate temporary settlement of the Kaskaskia Indians on their migration for the mission of the Immaculate Conception on the Illinois River, to the later mission of the Immaculate Conception on the Mississippi and the Okaw Rivers in South Illinois.

The possible causes of this fitting of an entire tribe to a new habitat were several, chief among them, however, we regard the following: The foundation of Biloxi by Iberville, on the lower Mississippi, had caused a serious commotion among the Indian Neophytes at Kaskaskia, or as Father Gravier styles them, "the Illinois of the Straits," meaning by this term the people at the narrow outlet of Peoria Lake, as distinguished from the Illinois of the Mississippi river. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Garraghan, Gilbert J., "Some High Lights in Missouri's History" in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. 3, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Moses Austin left a Memorandum of his Journey from Virginia to Louisiana, West of the Mississippi River, 1796-7, from which this statement is cited by Father Kenny.

Kaskaskias were determined to leave the Peorias and to sail away to the south and live under the walls of Iberville's strong and rich new settlement at the mouth of the Great River. Father Gravier tells us of the momentous event: "I arrived too late among the Illinois of the Strait, of whom Father Marest had charge, to prevent the migration of the village of the Kaskaskia, which has been too precipitately made, in consequence of uncertain news respecting the Mississippi settlement. I do not think that the Kaskaskias would have thus separated from the Peouaroua and from the other Illinois of the Strait, if I could have arrived sooner. I reached them at least soon enough to conciliate their minds to some extent, and to prevent the insult that the Peouaroos and the Mouingouana were resolved to offer the Kaskaskia and the French when they embarked. I addressed all the chiefs in full Council, and, as they continue to retain some respect and good will for me, they parted very peaceably. But I augur no good from this separation, which I have always opposed, for I foresaw but too well the evil consequences that would result from it. And may God grant that the road from Chicagwa to the Strait be not closed, and that the entire Illinois Mission may not suffer greatly thereby."<sup>3</sup>

As the missions on the Illinois were dependant on Quebec for their supplies, the road over Chicago to Michillimackinae had to be kept open. If the Illinois Indians were not strong enough to resist the inroads of the Iroquois and the Sioux, the road to Canada would no longer be open and the missions would be doomed.

But the Kaskaskias were on their way to the South; all that Father Gravier's persuasions could accomplish was to halt the voyage near the Tamarois' village, where Fathers Marest and Pinet were awaiting them. Rouensa, the great chief of the Kaskaskias, who was a faithful Catholic, was leading them on, but did not know where to lead them. It had dawned upon his mind that the voyage to the Lower Mississippi was simply impossible. But to stay with the Cahokias and Tamarois on their narrow strip of territory between the river and the bluffs seemed equally destructive. Beyond the river lay a boundless expanse of woodland and prairie. Some of the Missouri tribes, as the Osages and Missouri, were friendly to them. Why not cross over and erect their cabins beyond? And that was exactly what the Kaskaskia did, and what Father Pinet induced his Tamarois to do; and what the French traders from Kaskaskia and from Cahokia did not fail to imitate. The proofs for this very interesting fact have only recently been dug from the dust of two centuries by the Jesuit Fathers Kenny and Garraghan of St. Louis University and others. We will here give the substance of the argument. The southern boundary of the city of St. Louis is formed by a little river flowing from the northwest into the Mississippi. It has always borne

---

<sup>3</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 65, p. 102 ss.

the poetical name of the Riviere des Peres, or the River of the Fathers. No one seemed to know when and why it was so named. Yet, the very name seemed to imply a certain connection with the Jesuit Fathers, the earliest missionaries in the Valley of the Mississippi. By a happy chance a number of letters were discovered in far-away Canada, that gave the key to the mystery, as we have already intimated. The time was 1700 and the occasion was the settlement made on the place, by Kaskaskia and Tamarois Indians and a considerable number of French traders and hunters from Old Kaskaskia on the Illinois and from Cahokia at the head of the American Bottoms.

Father St. Cosme, priest of the Foreign Missions had returned from Arkansas to Cahokia in March 1700. Here he found his brother in the Society, Father Bergier, and his cousin, the younger St. Cosme,<sup>4</sup> who was not in priest's orders. He set about building a chapel and a Mission-house. St. Cosme was greatly surprised at the Jesuit's claim to the mission among the Tamarois, and Father Bergier, who remained alone after Father St. Cosme's second departure for the South, was still more embarrassed by the arrival of the whole tribe of the Kaskaskias, as we gather from the letters to Bishop Laval written in 1700. Father St. Cosme wrote: "We had the chapel completed and erected a fine cross. But I was very much surprised at Father Binneteau's arrival. He had left Peoria to come and settle this mission."<sup>5</sup> Father Bergier on his part, informed the Bishop of the conditions obtaining in the mission in a letter dated February 1700: "I related to your Highness our trip to the Illinois, from which place I wrote you all I had found out about the condition of the missions and that which concerns the government of your church. There remains but to inform you of the condition of the latter. I arrived there the 7th of this month with young Mr. de St. Cosme. I have counted there a hundred cabins in all, or thereabouts, of which nearly half are vacant, because the greater part of the Cahokias are still in winter quarters twenty or twenty-five leagues from here up the Mississippi.

"The Village is composed of Tamarois, Cahokias, some Michigans and Peorias. There are also some Missouri cabins, and shortly, there are to come about thirty-five cabins of this last-named nation, who are winter-quartering some ten or fifteen leagues from here below the village on the river. We must not, however, count this nation as forming part of the village and of the Tamarois mission, because it remains there only a few months to make the Indian wheat, while awaiting a day to return to its village, which is more than a hundred leagues away, upon the shores of the Missouri river. This it has not dared to undertake for the last

<sup>4</sup> Shea, John G., "The Catholic Church in Colonial Days," p. 541.

<sup>5</sup> St. Cosme to Mgr. Laval, dated at Tamarois, March 1700.

few years for fear of being surprised and defeated on the way by some other hostile nation.

"The Tamarois and the Cahokias are the only ones that really form part of this mission. The Tamarois have about thirty cabins, and the Cahokias have nearly twice that number. Although the Tamarois are at present less numerous than the Cahokias, the village is still called Tamarois gallicized 'Des Tamarois,' because the Tamarois have been the first and are still the oldest inhabitants and have first lit a fire here, to use the Indian expression. All the other nations who have joined them afterwards have not caused the name of the village to change, but have been under the name of Tamarois although they were not Tamarois."<sup>6</sup>

In the following year, however, after the arrival of the Kaskaskia tribe with their missionary, Marest, Father Bergier wrote from Tamarois about a division of his people occasioned by the new exodus of the Kaskaskias to the little river on the west bank now called the Des Peres: He gives his information in brief, clear-cut numbered clauses, which we subjoin together with Father Kenny's running comment.

1. "The Kats (this is a common short form for Kaskaskia) to the extent of about thirty cabins, have established their new village two leagues below this on the other side of the Mississippi. They have built a fort there, and nearly all the French have hastened thither."<sup>7</sup>

Two leagues below "Tamarois," and "on the other side of the Mississippi" brings us into Missouri at the mouth of the Des Peres River. "They have built a fort there" and "nearly all the French have hastened thither", indicate a settlement of whites. A number of Frenchmen left the confederated camp with the Kaskaskia; we see these now augmented by the accession of Frenchmen who had been at Tamarois, so that it is safe to say, that the whites in Missouri in 1700 were the largest aggregation of Caucasians at any one spot on the entire Mississippi Valley. Monsignor Bergier continues:

2. "The chief of the Tamarois, followed by some cabins, joined the Kats, attracted by Rouensa, who promises them much, and makes them believe him saying that he is called by the great chief of the French, Mr. d'Iberville, as Father Marest has told him."<sup>8</sup>

3. "The remainder of the Tamarois, numbering about twenty cabins are shortly going to join their chief, already settled at the Kats. So there

---

<sup>6</sup> Bergier to Bishop of Quebec, February, 1700. Archives of Laval University, Quebec, quoted by Fortier, E. J., in "Illinois State Historical Library," No. 13, p. 233 ss., and by Father Lawrence Kenny, S. J., in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 151, cf. also "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. V, p. 149.

<sup>7</sup> "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 152.

<sup>8</sup> "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 153.

will remain here only the Cahokia numbering 60 or 70 cabins. They are cutting stakes to build a fort.”<sup>9</sup>

“Here we learn how it came about that the early Illinois settlement changed its name at this time from Tamarois to Cahokia. The Tamarois abandoned the site and the Cahokia made it their permanent home.”<sup>10</sup> It was early in 1700 that the Kaskaskia migration reached the Tamarois or Cahokia village. But it is not probable that it rested there very long, the inference, therefore, seems justified that the foundation of the new Kaskaskia village at the junction of the Riviere des Peres with the Father of Waters, as indicated by Father Bergier, took place before the end of 1700. The friendly cooperation between the Jesuit Pinet and the Seminary priest Bergier did not last long. In fact, Father Pinet was recalled by Father Marest to the place he termed “Among the Kaskaskias,” which is, of course, the village of the Jesuit Fathers on the soil of Missouri. Father Marest, writes to Father Lamberville in Paris under date of July 5, 1702: “Father Pinet a very holy and zealous missionary, has left the station at the Tamarois, or Arkinsa,<sup>11</sup> in accordance with your directions to me. But he has only half quitted it, for he has left a man in our house there who takes care of it, and thus we occasionally go thither from this place to show that we are obedient to the king, pending the receipt of his orders. That Father now has charge of the Kaskaskias, where I leave him alone, to his great sorrow—owing to present circumstances, wherein Monsieur Bergier shows that he is a worthy member of the Missions Etrangeres. Inform him of the ruling by which the Vicars-General have no right to visit our churches or to hear confessions in them without our consent. I am convinced that these missions will receive rude shocks. They were beginning to be on a good footing. This caused jealousy in the minds of the Gentlemen of the Foreign Missions, who have come to take them from us. God grant that they may leave them in a better condition than we have done.”<sup>12</sup>

Father Bergier at Cahokia had been appointed Vicar-General of the Bishop of Quebec in the Mississippi Valley; and Father Gravier, the former Vicar-General, had referred the entire dispute concerning the Illinois Missions to the judgment of the King. As the Seminary priests were confirmed in their possession of the Mission at Cahokia, Father Pinet was recalled, and Father Bergier assumed control of the Indians and what was left of the French at Cahokia. This happened about the middle of June 1702. Personally, the two missionary bands were on friendly terms; yet the friction caused by the contested authority had

<sup>9</sup> “St. Louis Catholic Historical Review,” vol. I, p. 153.

<sup>10</sup> Kenny, *ibidem*.

<sup>11</sup> Arkinsa are the adopted tribe of the Metchigamias who had arrived from the Arkansas River.

<sup>12</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” vol. 66, p. 253.

not been without deleterious influence on the Indian population of the two villages on opposite sides of the river. As Father Garraghan tells us in his recent article in the *Sunday Globe-Democrat* of St. Louis: "Rouensa, the Kaskaskia chief, offered every inducement to the Tamarois and Cahokia to move across the river to his new settlement. Presents were not wanting, 500 pounds of powder and "a cask when the French shall have come up from the sea." Father Bergier, to hold his Indians, had to lay before them counter attractions, "a kettle, four pounds of powder, a pound of colored glass beads, four boxes of vermilion and a dozen knives." Long Neck, the Tamarois chief, set before his people the charms of the Kaskaskia village, which had won for itself the alluring soubriquet of "The Land of Life."<sup>13</sup>

"On the other hand, Chicagoua, another Tamarois chief, showed himself indifferent in the question of the hour and declared it was all one to him, whether his tribesmen went or stayed. In the end, only a third of the Tamarois, some twelve cabins, with their chief, presumably Long Neck, moved to the Des Peres. A much larger number had no doubt been expected, as one day in April 1701, Rouensa sent as many as twenty-three pirogues<sup>14</sup> to bring the Indians over from Cahokia. Whether the rest of the tribe eventually followed the third that migrated, cannot be ascertained. At all events, it is significant that a hitherto unpublished map in the National Library, Paris, indicates the Tamarois village as being, at this period, on the west side of the Mississippi below Cahokia."<sup>15</sup>

Thus time ran on in the little village by the River des Peres. Father Boré came here as also Brother Guibert. The chapel was well attended by the neophytes. Trade with the tribes on the Missouri River was going on briskly. Yet, the feeling was abroad that the Des Peres settlement was not the final goal of the Kaskaskia migration.

In his letter of July 5th, 1702 to Father Lamberville, Father Marest writes about Father Mermet's going to the new post on the Wabash probably meaning the mouth of the Ohio,<sup>16</sup> which was often called the Wabash, and his own intention of visiting the Sioux country. He then adds the significant remark: "An effort should be made to give us accurate information about Monsieur de Ponchartrain's intentions—respecting what is

<sup>13</sup> Rochemonteix, Camille de, "Les Jesuites et La Nouvelle France aux XVII<sup>e</sup> Siecle," Paris, 1895.

<sup>14</sup> A pirogue is a log hollowed out by fire.

<sup>15</sup> Father Garraghan of the St. Louis University, whilst in Paris, discovered a large number of 200-year old maps, for the most part sketches which the celebrated cartographer Guillaume de Lisle left at his death forty years before Laeclde Liquest planned to build St. Louis. They are now available in photostatic copies in the Collection of the Missouri Historical Society.

<sup>16</sup> Probably on the site of Fort Massac.

asked and expected from our Savages, as well as the grant that the Court will be pleased to give them. I think you understand what I mean."<sup>17</sup>

"Our Savages" are the Kaskaskias and Tamarois on the Riviere des Peres. Shall they remain there, or if not, where shall they go? These were the questions that agitated the writer's mind. His correspondent certainly understood what he meant.

At what time this removal to Kaskaskia on the Illinois side of the Mississippi was effected, is not quite clear. The only clew we have is an entry in the Kaskaskia Baptismal Record: "1702, April 25. Ad ripam Metchegameam dictam venimus."<sup>18</sup> "In 1703, on April 25, we arrived on the banks of the river called the Metchigamia." Now it is plain that this in no wise refers to Lake Michigan, but to a river. The Mechigamias, one of the six tribes of the Illinois confederation, had returned to the American Bottom from Arkansas and had occupied the country along the Okaw River, which was afterward called the Kaskaskia River, but was known up to Boisbriant's time as the Metchigamia River. It would therefore, appear that the last migration of the Kaskaskias took place early in 1703.

Delisle's Map of 1703,<sup>19</sup> places Kaskaskia on the north bank of the Riviere des Peres. It is called "the Old Village of the Kaskaskias", and its location is fixed on the Missouri side by an official report on the Seigniorship of the Tamarois Mission in 1735, as about opposite to the mouth of the river Dupont, which issued from the marshes of the American Bottom and comes with gentle flow into the Mississippi."<sup>20</sup>

After the departure of the Kaskaskia and allied Indians, the village continued a precarious existence as the haunt of trappers and traders and scattered tribesmen of various nations, at least until 1735 when the plan was entertained to rebuild Fort Chartres at "the old village of the Kaskaskias."<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 66, p. 41.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Mason, E. G., "Kaskaskia and Its Parish Records," Chicago, 1881. p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> This date would seem to imply that the new Kaskaskia in Southern Illinois was already founded in 1703.

<sup>20</sup> "Explication du plan et etablissement de la Seignorie de la Mission des Tamarois," April 12, 1735, Laval University MS.

<sup>21</sup> The "Explication" gives the reasons why the old village of the Kaskaskias is regarded as a very advantageous site for the stone fort which the Court orders built in the Illinois: "lime-stone, building stone, wood for construction, a river to harbor the boats, the view over the Mississippi about two leagues up and two leagues down, the rocky bluff which slopes very gently down to the Mississippi, a fine prairie adjoining said bluff, the Mississippi which would be under the protection of the fort. The Missouri too, which empties into the river five leagues from here on the west side of said river, and the Illinois River which mingles its waters therewith eleven leagues from here on the west, (east). All these considerations would seem to prove the necessity of building the fort in question (in this place) as is very much the talk

But what name did this historic village and the Mission bear? No doubt some of the voyageurs up and down the Mississippi called it the village of "the Fathers," as distinguished from Cahokia, the village of "the Gentlemen of the Seminary." Others called it Kaskaskia as the former home of the principal tribe; Others again called it by name of the great chief of the Kaskaskias, "the village of Rouensa," as Father Bergier in his letter to Bishop Vallier seems to imply, and as Father Mermet plainly states, March 2nd, 1706. But there certainly was some sainted name attached to a Catholic village and Jesuit Mission; Father Mermet tells us what it was: speaking of the Tamarois braves who brought the wounded Father Gravier in a canoe from the Peoria village on the Illinois River to the village on the des Peres, he praises them saying: "They did not leave him until he reached us at Ruenza's village, which is called St. Francois de Xavier, as you are aware."<sup>22</sup>

---

now. In case this be done, the Seignorie of Tamarois would soon be established from one end to the other."

<sup>22</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 66, p. 57.

## CAHOKIA AND THE SEMINARY PRIESTS

It was at Chicago in the Mission of the Guardian Angel, that we first met Father Francis Pinet, its founder. And it was Father St. Cosme who introduced us to him, October 21st, 1698. Father Binneteau had just arrived from the South to accompany Father Pinet to the Illinois country. Both were preparing for the journey. Their house stood on the bank of a small river, with Lake Michigan on one side, and a fine vast prairie on the other. The village of the savages contained over a hundred and fifty cabins, and a league up the river was another village almost as large.<sup>1</sup> The Indians were Miamis. Father St. Cosme tells us that Father Pinet usually resided there except in winter, when the savages were all away, and that he then went to the Illinois. This was as early as 1698. Two years later we find Father Pinet already established at Cahokia, with Father Bergier of the Seminary of Quebec, having formed a mission, consisting of the Tamarois, Cahokias and possibly the Metchigamia from Arkansas. The Mission bore the name of the Holy Family. From this it would follow that Cahokia was the first Catholic foundation on the Upper Mississippi. Its location near the mouths of two important rivers, the Missouri and the Illinois, made it, for a time, the center of trade in the Illinois country. Thus Cahokia may claim the honor of priority of settlement on the borders of the Great River, not only as an Indian Mission but as a Parish of Catholic Frenchmen.

The French villages in Illinois resulted from the grand colonization plan of Lasalle. The earliest one, indeed, Kaskaskia, on the Illinois river, was nothing more than a primitive Indian village until the crowning of the Rock of the Illinois with Fort St. Louis. Next in the order of time was the village of the Peorias at the foot of Lake Peoria. Then came Cahokia founded some time before the close of the seventeenth century.

As to the merits of the case between the Jesuit Fathers and the Gentlemen of the Seminary the advantage seems to be on the side of the former: yet the later grant, though based on a misunderstanding, speaks in favor of the latter.

Cahokia, also called Tamarois, was the chief seat of the two Illinois tribes whose names it bore. In December 1690, Bishop St.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Chicago and the Old Northwest" by Miles Milton Quaife, contains a thorough discussion of Father Pinet's Mission of the Angel Guardian at Chicago, pp. 39-42. Cf. also Frank R. Grover's lecture on Father Pinet and his Mission.

Vallier of Quebec had appointed Father Gravier, S. J., his Vicar General and entrusted the care of the Illinois mission and other surrounding nations to the Jesuits. "Some of the surrounding nations" are specifically mentioned: "the Miamis and the Sioux towards the west." The Cahokias and Tamarois, being of the Illinois nation, were within Father Gravier's jurisdiction. Father Gravier had visited Cahokia at least once; But no mission had so far been established there when the Seminary of Quebec asked and obtained from Bishop Vallier, by letters patent, dated June 4, 1698, a grant of the Tamarois mission as a necessary key to the entire valley of the Missouri River. Without losing any time Father John Bergier, a priest of the Seminary of Quebec, started for Tamarois, on February 7, 1700, in order to establish the Mission of the Holy Family. About the same time the Jesuit Father Francis Pinet arrived and claimed the mission on the ground that the evangelization of all the Illinois tribes was committed to the Jesuits. Both priests remained at Tamarois, Father Bergier ministering to the French traders and Father Pinet to the Indians. Peace ruled in the village: but it was threatened from the North-west by the Sioux, and from the South-east by the Shawnees. On June 14, 1700, Father Bergier wrote: "We have frequent alarms here, and have several times been obliged to receive within our walls nearly all the women and children of the village. Pentecost Sunday there was an alarm, which was not without consequences. "Some Sioux war-party had murdered a number of men and women. Some Tamarois Indians and Frenchmen fought off the invaders and captured three Sioux. The prisoners were "Killed, burnt and eaten."<sup>2</sup> Father Pinet instructed one of the victims before death and baptized him.

After the return of the Cahokias from their winter-quarters, the exodus of the Kaskaskia with a part of the Tamarois and the French traders, to the newly-established village on the Missouri side took place. On June 4th 1701, an ecclesiastical commission appointed by the King, Louis XIV, decided that the Tamarois Mission belonged to the Seminary. Father Gravier gracefully accepted the decision and recalled Father Pinet to the new Kaskaskia village on the River des Peres where Father Marest had already gone. But when Father Bergier set up his claim that he had been appointed Vicar General in place of the Jesuit Superior, Father Gravier demurred. The two rival establishments on opposite banks of the Mississippi, however, maintained friendly relations, the members visiting one another as good neighbors. The only differences between them originated in the contested Vicar-Generalship. Monsignor Bergier remained in Cahokia as missionary and Vicar-General of Quebec until his death, in 1712. As such he administered the

---

<sup>2</sup> Father Bergier's 3rd letter, dated June 14, 1700, in Fortier's "The Establishment of the Tamarois Mission."

last sacraments to Father Francis Pinet, who died the death of a saint, August 1, 1702, and buried him in the little grave-yard on the Missouri side, although he had, in the excess of zeal for authority, interdicted the church on the Riviere des Peres.

Six years previous in 1706, Monsignor Bergier had visited Bienville in Mobile,<sup>3</sup> where a priest of the Foreign Mission, Father de la Vente, was pastor. In consequence of the Vicar-General's representations a larger residence was erected for the priests at the church adjoining Fort St. Louis in the Bay of Mobile. When at last the Kaskaskia Indians and their French followers were definitely settled in their new village at the mouth of the Okaw River in what is now Randolph County, Illinois, the friendly visits for spiritual converse and mutual help and consolation did not cease, although they became less frequent. On November 9, 1712, Father Marest writes of his last visit to Father Bergier at the Tamarois village. "Having learnt that the Monsignor was dangerously ill, I immediately went to assist him. I remained eight entire days with this worthy ecclesiastic. The care I took of him and the remedies which I gave him, seemed gradually to restore him, so that he urged me to return to my village. Before leaving him, I administered to him the Holy Viaticum. He instructed me as to the condition of his mission, recommending it to me in case that God should take him away. When I arrived at our village nearly all the savages had gone, (on their usual hunting excursion). They were scattered along the Mississippi. I immediately set out to join them."<sup>4</sup> Here the Missionary was kept very busy with sick-calls to the various encampments; yet the illness of Father Bergier continually disturbed his mind and urged him to return to Kaskaskia. But no news had come from Tamarois and, as "no news is good news," Father Marest's anxiety was greatly relieved. A few days afterward however, a young slave came to apprise him of Father Bergier's death and beg him to go to perform the funeral rites. Father Marest set out at once and, walking all night, arrived there towards evening the next day. In the morning he said Mass for the deceased and buried him in the churchyard of Cahokia. The death of Father Bergier was a most edifying one; he felt it coming all at once, and said that it would be useless to send for a priest from Kaskaskia, since he would be dead before his arrival. He merely took in his hands the crucifix which he kissed lovingly and expired."<sup>5</sup> Father Marest

---

3 Father de la Vente in his earlier days, one of the three important personages in Mobile, or in the language of Gayarré, "one of the hinges upon which everything turned in the commonwealth of Louisiana," "History of Louisiana, I, p. 87. Mobile was the seat of the Government before the foundation of New Orleans.

4 "Jesuit Relations," vol. 66, p. 263.

5 "Jesuit Relations," vol. 66, p. 263.

adds to his account of Father Bergier's death a gentle word of praise, calling him "a missionary of true merit and of a very austere life."

After Father Bergier's death the mission and Parish of Cahokia remained in care of the Jesuits of Kaskaskia because the Seminary of Quebec had no one to send to this important station. On October 16, 1717, Father Dominic Mary Varlet received the appointment from the Bishop of Quebec as Vicar-General, especially for Fort le Mobile or Fort St. Louis, and the places and missions along the River Mississippi, with the jurisdiction over all priests, secular or regular, except priests of the Society of Jesus, who were subject to their own Superior. "The new Vicar-General represented to the Bishop that a considerable time might elapse before he could reach the Tamarois Mission, and that in the mean time the Seminary might be unable to send a successor to Rev. M. Bergier at that place, he therefore solicited a confirmation of the original Letters-Patent granted to the Seminary of Quebec for the Mississippi Mission and especially for that of the Tamarois. The Bishop accordingly renewed the letters of May 10 and July 14, 1698. Monsignor Varlet proceeded to occupy his new field of labor. He had served at Mobile as a missionary from 1713 to 1715 and from 1715 on, he signed himself as Vicar-General. The document of 1717, therefore, is but an extension of his powers after the death of Vicar-General Bergier. There is no proof to show that Father Varlet attended the Parish of Cahokia at any time, though he seems to have visited it. In 1718 Father Varlet was appointed Bishop of Ascalon and Coadjutor to the Bishop of Babylon and, after receiving episcopal consecration, set out for the East. Meanwhile evidence had reached Rome that Varlet was an active adherent to the doctrines of Jansenism. Bishop Varlet then retired to Utrecht in Holland where he helped to establish the Jansenist Church, consecrating four of its archbishops. He died in 1742. The so-called Old-Catholics derive their episcopate from this renegade Bishop.<sup>6</sup>

After Monsignor's departure in 1719 the Seminary of the Foreign Missions sent Fathers Antoine Thauver de la Source and Francois le Mercier to Cahokia. It was due to the influence exerted by these two missionaries, that Sieur des Ursins of the "Royal Company of the Indies," and Pierre Duguet de Boisbriant, the "First Lieutenant of the King in the Province of Louisiana," granted to the Missionaries of Cahokia and Tamarois, in Fee Simple "a tract of Four Leagues square with the neighboring island,<sup>7</sup> to be taken a quarter of a league above the small river of the Cahokias, situated above the Indian Village, and in going up

---

<sup>6</sup> "Catholic Church in the Colonies," John G. Shea, p. 556. Both letters assigning the Tamarois Mission to the Seminary priests, "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. V. As to Varlet, cf. "American Catholic Quarterly Review," vol. XIV, pp. 533 ss.

<sup>7</sup> This Island is now called Arsenal Island.

following the course of the Mississippi, and in returning towards the Fort of Chartres, running in depth to the north, east and south for quantity.”<sup>8</sup> The French government on August 1743 confirmed this grant. But as early as June 22, 1722, the missionaries were authorized, “to work, clear, plant the land.” Thus the Mission of Cahokia became a grand Seigniorship stretching from the village to the confines of Fort Chartres.<sup>9</sup>

Father Charlevoix on his tour of inspection from Canada to the Gulf arrived at Cahokia on the 10th day of October 1721, and left us an interesting account of the place and its priests: “The same Day, October 19, we went to stay in a village of the Cahokias and Tamarois. These are two nations of the Illinois which are united, and who do not together make a very numerous village. It is situated on a little river<sup>10</sup> which comes from the east, and which has no water but in the Spring season, so that we were forced to walk a good half league to the cabins. I was surprised that they had chosen such an inconvenient situation, as they might have found a much better one; but they told me that the Mississippi washed the foot of the village when it was built, and that in three years the river had lost half a league of ground, and that they were thinking of looking out for another settlement. I passed the night in the house of the missionaries, who are two ecclesiastics of the Seminary of Quebec, formerly my disciples, but who might now be my masters. The elder of the two, Dominic A. Thamer was absent. I found the younger, Francois le Mercier such as he has been reported to me, severe to himself, full of charity for others and making virtue amiable in his own person. But he has so little health, that I think he cannot long support the way of life which they are obliged to lead in these missions.”<sup>11</sup>

The Gentlemen of the Seminary as well as the Jesuit Fathers had long cast wistful eyes upon the West, where the Missouri rolled its muddy waters through lands of many nations still sitting “in darkness and the shadow of death.” But adventurous laymen showed the way to their goal. In March 1702, seventeen Frenchmen left Cahokia to ascend the Missouri river; Derbanne followed about 1706; Darac was dispatched by Bienville to the Missouri in 1710; Nine years later

---

<sup>8</sup> The “Illinois Catholic Historical Review” has two articles on the Catholic Mission Property by Joseph J. Thompson, vol. V, p. 195-217 and vol. VI, p. 99-135. The grant was made by Boisbriant, and des Ursins on June 22, 1722. At Father Mercier’s request, April 20, 1743, Vaudreuil promised to obtain the confirmation from Maurepas which was given on August 4, 1743. The further transaction in regard to the Cahokia Mission property was involved in darkness. What Vaudreuil himself confirmed was the title to lands the Gentlemen of the Seminary had illegally bought from the Indians in order to divide them gratis among bona fide settlers.

<sup>9</sup> Fort Chartres stood about ten miles north of Kaskaskia.

<sup>10</sup> The Cahokia Creek.

<sup>11</sup> Wallace, Jos., “The History of Illinois and Louisiana,” p. 209.

Dutisne, coming from the South, disembarked his force at the mouth of the Saline River, ten miles below what was destined to be Ste. Genevieve, and taking a north-west course reached the Indian villages on the Osage and Missouri.<sup>12</sup> These soldiers, hunters and traders brought back the report that among the nations of the Missouri some seemed very well disposed to receive the Gospel. The Jesuit Father Limoges on March 9, 1700 made known to Father St. Cosme his desire to go among the tribes of the Missouri as a missionary. Father St. Cosme's successor at Cahokia, Father Bergier, in May 1702 wrote: "The two principal missions which I should like to take in hand, if there were men and money, are the Cances (Kansas) and the Panimahas (Loups) along the river of the Missouri's."<sup>13</sup>

It was Father Mercier who was chosen in 1723 to attempt, in a very restricted manner, the grand dream of Father Limoges and Father Bergier, to establish "missions among the Kansas and Panimahas (Loups) and the other tribes along the river of the Missouri's." The Sieur Vensard de Bourgmond, who as early as 1714, had navigated the Missouri River as far as its junction with the Platte, and at a later date had reached a point as far north as Dakota, was commissioned in 1723, to undertake the military occupation of the Missouri. Diron D'Artaguiette, the commander of Fort Chartres, records in his Journal of 1723 the following incidents of his meeting with Bourgmont's party: "About noon, June 4, wind being contrary, we perceived four boats and two pirogues full of Canadians. We fired some shots and went on shore to wait for them. It was M. Bourgmont, who with a company of fifty men, of whom M. Pradel was captain, was going up the river to the Missouris. The Sunday at 4 P.M. I reviewed the company. Many of them were sick."<sup>14</sup> As the party was on the way to Cahokia, D'Artaguiette joined them. The Journal continues: "At daybreak June 6, we embarked and came to get breakfast at the *Old village of the Cahokias*, which is on the *left as you ascend*,<sup>15</sup> a league and a half distant from the village of the Cahokias. In this place we perceived a large pirogue, of French make, which was crossing over from the village of the Cahokias. . . . We then continued our journey and arrived about ten o'clock in the morning at the poste, where the Sieur de St. Ange is in command with six soldiers. This is a wretched fort of piles, where the Sieur Mercier, priest of the Foreign Mission, has a

<sup>12</sup> "Travels Through that Part of North America Formerly called Louisiana," by Capt. Bossu, London, 1771.

<sup>13</sup> "Emergence of the Missouri Valley into History," Garraghan, S. J. "Thought," vol. I, No. 2, p. 203.

<sup>14</sup> "Journal of Diron D'Artaguiette," 1723, in Mereness Collection, p. 84.

<sup>15</sup> This is the Old Village of the Kaskaskias on the Des Peres.

house and church. An eighth of a league higher up is the village of the Cahokias."<sup>16</sup>

The old village of the Cahokias, on the left as you ascend, a league and a half distant from the village of the Cahokias on the Illinois side, is Father Pinet's one-time mission of St. Francis Xavier. St. Ange de Bellerive, the commandant of the fort, and Father Francis Mercier, one of the two priests of the Cahokia mission, joined the expedition up the Missouri River.

Having arrived at the village of the Missouris, with a party of about fifty Frenchmen, November 9, 1723, Bourgmond erected his fort, known in history as Fort Orleans, on the north bank of the Missouri in Carroll County.<sup>17</sup> The Chaplain of the expedition was Father John Baptist Mercier, the pastor of Cahokia. There was a room in the fort, dedicated to divine service, the earliest house of worship erected in the Valley of the Missouri. "The Te Deum chanted by Mercier at the Fort, November 5, 1724, on Bourgmond's return from his adventurous march across the Kansas plains," says Father Garraghan, "was a unique religious ceremony in the history of the West...."<sup>18</sup> Together with the commandant, Father Mercier paid visits to the Missouri and Osage Villages, where he apparently made an impression upon the Indians; for their chiefs, whom Bourgmond brought to Paris in 1725, declared in their address to Louis XV, "that they never had any one to teach them to pray, save only a "white collar," who came to them a little time ago, whom they are happy to have, and, (they) beseech you to send others."<sup>19</sup> In 1725 Desliettes, Commandant of the Illinois Country, was instructed "to thank le Sieur Mercier, chaplain of the post of the Missouris, for his services; and that was all of earthly recompense the priest received for his long and faithful labors." By order of the Company of the Indies, dated October 27, 1724, Fort Orleans was abandoned in 1728. "A Missionary, however, was to be left there, if he thought he could make any progress in the preaching of the Gospel among the Indians. Father Mercier returned with the garrison and resumed his previous functions as missionary at Cahokia.<sup>20</sup> Yet he did not lose interest in the prospect "for missions which it is desirable

---

<sup>16</sup> Mereness Collection, pp. 79 and 80.

<sup>17</sup> Fort Orleans was not built on an island in the Missouri, but on the Tetsan Bend two miles above the mouth of the Wakenda River. Cf. the Baron Marc de Villier's, "La Découverte du Missouri et l'Histoire du Fort Orleans, 1673-1728, Paris, 1925.

<sup>18</sup> "Emergence of the Missouri Valley Into History," Garraghan, in "Thought," vol. I, No. 2, p. 207.

<sup>19</sup> Garraghan, p. 207.

<sup>20</sup> Garraghan, p. 208.

should be established on the Missouri River.’’<sup>21</sup> According to Bossu, Father Mercier was a Canadian by birth. He came to Cahokia in 1718, and remained there until 1753. Bossu praises him as a worthy Apostle of Louisiana: “I have been particularly acquainted with the Abbé Mercier, a Canadian by birth, and vicar of the whole country of Illinois. He was a man of probity, whose friendship could not fail of being of use to me by the knowledge he had acquired of the manner of the Indians, who were edified by his virtue and disinterestedness. He spoke the language of the country and, on account of the fluency with which he expressed himself in it, he was highly esteemed among the Indians, who consulted him in all matters.’’<sup>22</sup>

Father Dominique Antoine Rene Thaurer de la Source was a student at the Jesuit College in Quebec at the time Charlevoix taught in that institution of learning, 1705 to 1709. Entering the Seminary of the Priests of the Foreign Missions he completed his studies and was ordained to the priesthood. On August 3, 1718, his name occurs in the Church Records of Detroit. He came to Tamarois in 1719 as companion to Father Mercier. At Father Charlevoix’s visit to Tamarois on October 10, 1721, he is still with Father Mercier, though absent at the moment on some missionary call. As Father Mercier remained among the Missouri Indians until the departure of Bourgmund for France in 1725, Father Thaurer de la Source alone retained charge of the Mission and parish of the Holy Family of the Cahokias. It seems probable that, two years after Father Mercier’s return, Father Thaurer left Tamarois for Canada by way of Detroit, as on March 25, 1728, his name occurs on the Records of the Church of St. Anne. Father Thaurer died at Quebec in the odor of Sanctity in 1728.<sup>23</sup>

His place was supplied by Father Joseph Courrier, who was regarded as a man of extraordinary sanctity—He died in New Orleans in the autumn of 1735. Father Gaston, who was sent to Cahokia with Father Courrier, is reported to have been killed by Indians soon after his arrival. The circumstances of his martyrdom are not known. Father Mercier, being left alone with the charge of the parish of Cahokia and the chaplaincy of St. Anne at Fort Chartres, was gladdened by the arrival of Father Joseph Gagnon, a priest true and faithful, but sinking under the weight of age and infirmity.

---

<sup>21</sup> Garraghan, p. 209.

<sup>22</sup> “Travels Through that part of North America formerly called Louisiana,” by Mr. Bossu, translated by Reinhold Forster, London, 1771, quoted by Garraghan, p. 209.

<sup>23</sup> Father Dominique Antoine René Thaurer de la Source made the voyage down the Mississippi with Father Montigni, Davion and St. Cosme, not as a priest, but began his studies in 1704, six years after the voyage.

Father Gagnon however managed to live on and to labor as Parish Priest of Cahokia and Chaplain of Fort Chartres until July 1759. He was buried in the church of St. Anne at Fort Chartres, but when that edifice threatened to fall into the current with the crumbling earth of the river-bank, his body, together with that of another chaplain, the Recollet, Luke Collet, was removed by the Jesuit Father Sebastian Meurin, in 1768.

Towards the end of Father Mercier's administration almost all the buildings of the Mission of the Holy Family were destroyed by fire. The Abbé Laurent, a priest of Chartres, France, was sent to Cahokia in 1739, the Seminary sending a very large sum for the purpose of rebuilding what was lost. After thirty-five years of strenuous labor among the Illinois and Missouri Indians, Father Mercier died at Cahokia, March 30, 1753. "The last glimpse we get of him in life" as Father Garraghan remarks, "is in the composite picture of the three Seminary Priests, Mercier, Gagnon and Laurent, drawn in 1750 by the Jesuit Vivier of Kaskaskia: "Nothing can be more amiable than their character, or more edifying than their conduct. We live with them as if we were members of the same body."

When Captain Philip Pittman visited Cahokia in 1767 he found it a long and straggling village about three-fourths of a mile from end to end, and containing forty-five dwelling-houses and a church near the center. "The land" he takes occasion to say, "was purchased from the savages by a few Canadians, some of whom married women of the Kaoquias Nation, and others brought wives from Canada, and then resided there, leaving their children to succeed them. The inhabitants of this place depend more on hunting and their Indian trade, than on agriculture. . . . What is called the Fort is a small house standing in the center of the village. . . . It was formerly inclosed with high Palisades, but these were torn down and burnt."<sup>24</sup>

The mission of the Cahokia Indians had passed out of existence before the departure of the last Seminary priest, Father Forget Duverger in 1764, and the Illinois Indians that once formed it, were almost totally destroyed in retaliation for the murder of the great chieftain Pontiac by an Illinois Indian at Cahokia in 1769.

---

<sup>24</sup> "The Present State of the European Settlements on the Mississippi," by Captain Philip Pittmann, London, 1770, p. 92.

## LAST DAYS OF GRAVIER AND MAREST

Father James Gravier after his return from the South in 1672, where he met all the important men of the day, and secured most valuable information, he took up once more the humble and laborious life of an Indian missionary. At the time of the exodus of the Kaskaskia from their ancestral haunts on the Illinois River, he had promised the Peorias that he would come to them at the earliest possible moment. The faithful Father now fulfilled his purpose. On the 5th of March 1702, he informed Father John Lamberville of the needs of the three missions of the Illinois, and stated that he himself was among the Peorias. Of his activities and fortunes among these stiffnecked Indians, Father John Mermet gives an interesting account in his letter "among the Kaskaskias, this 2nd of March 1706," from which we shall extract the salient facts. "One of the notables of the Peoria tribe, a certain *Tete D'Ours*, (Bear's Head) had been at Mackinac and had there been impressed by the weakness and timidity of the French officials before the threatening conduct of the Ottawas. He determined to make himself dreaded at home and enrich himself with the spoils of "the black-gown and the French." On his return to the Illinois he frequently harangued the people to rebellion against the foreigners. All these discourses excited the minds to revolt and, although not all were of that opinion, a great many followed it. One of these latter threatened to take revenge on Father Gravier, for a supposed slight, "and when he met him in the village, he ran to his cabin for his bow and arrows and, without saying a word, shot the Father, wounding him dangerously. Two arrows struck his breast, but glanced off; a third tore his ear; the next would have killed him, had it not been for the collar of his cassock, which stopped the arrow-head; the fifth was a deadly shot; for the arrow pierced the arm above the wrist, and penetrated to below the elbow; three streams of blood poured from the opened veins and from the severed artery. The Father plucked out the arrow, but the stone head stuck in the sinews near the joint of the elbow,—within, as we suppose."<sup>1</sup> At the very first news of this accident, Father Mermet, then still at the Kaskaskia Village on the River des Peres, applied to Rouensa, who gave him four men to get the Father. "These men told Father Gravier that Rouensa had ordered them to die with him. Thus they did not leave him until he reached us at Rouensa's village, which is called St.

<sup>1</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 66, p. 55.

Francis Xavier.<sup>2</sup> The poor Father Gravier, could barely say mass once or twice; he had to be dressed like a child; but afterward his arm swelled more than ever, and he could not use it. He uttered cries day and night, like a man who is being burned; in fact, he felt pains similar to those caused by a scorching fire. His condition excited compassion in me, for I had no means of relieving him. At last I proposed somewhat rashly, to lance the swelled arm, and he consented. 'But' he said, 'you will have to cut very deep with the lancet, to reach the stone arrow-head.' I am not sufficiently skillful to flatter myself that I can find it, even if you were to point out the place where the pain is most severe; but I hope to give you relief by allowing the pus to flow. He consents; he exhorts me to perform the operation, and I set to work. I thrust the lancet three times into his arm, fortunately without injuring him, or opening the principal vein, although the lancet was buried to one-half its depth. After this a great quantity of putrid blood, having a very disagreeable odor, escaped, and this gave him relief; but the stone did not appear and we despaired of curing him. How could an inexperienced man, as I was, seek it among the sinews?"<sup>3</sup>

Father Gravier was prevailed on to go to Mobile to have his wound attended to. A traveling merchant, M. Bouat, who did not venture to proceed northward to Canada on account of the insolence of the Illinois Indians, volunteered to conduct the Father to Mobile. But the surgeons of that city gave no relief. Hence the Father in his continuous pain took a ship for Paris, but, as he wrote on March 6th, 1707, "not with the intention of finding some one who might extract from the middle of my arm the stone arrow-head which is riveted there for the rest of my life, but urged by anxiety to procure for the Rev. Father General workers whom our missions greatly need."<sup>4</sup> Father Gravier died in the Louisiana Mission after his return voyage from France, April 26th, 1708. . . . His last letter, as far as we know, contains the following touching tributes to his associates on the Illinois Mission, Marest and Mermet:

"In my village which is five hundred leagues distant from Quebec, and which consists of about three thousand souls,—unless, during the pastor's absence, the flock is dispersed for a time,—I have for the last nineteen years lived nearly always alone without a colleague, without a companion, often even without a servant. I am already fifty-six years old. Father Gabriel Marest likewise lives alone in his mission with the same nation. During an entire day he has hardly time to recite his breviary, or to eat, or to take a short rest in the middle of the night. His fellow-missionary, Father Jean Mermet, can hardly work,

<sup>2</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 66, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 66, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 66, p. 122.

owing to his ruined state of health after having spent all his strength by excess of zeal. . . . They have hardly time to breathe, on account of the increasing number of neophytes and their very great fervor; for out of two thousand two hundred souls, who compose their village, hardly forty may be found who do not profess the Catholic Faith with the greatest piety and constancy. We are separated from each other by a distance of 120 leagues and hardly once every other year have I time to visit him.”<sup>5</sup> This mission of Fathers’ Marest and Mermet, is the Immaculate Conception of Kaskaskia on the Mississippi River. It is from this new place Father Marest writes his letter to Father Germon, dated at Kaskaskia, an Illinois Village, otherwise called the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, November 9th, 1712: “Our Illinois inhabit a very pleasant country; the great rivers which water it, the vast and dense forests, the delightful prairies, the hills covered with very thick woods, all these features make a charming variety. This region does not end with the Illinois river; it stretches along the Mississippi on both sides and is about two hundred leagues in length and more than a hundred in breadth.”<sup>6</sup> Besides the Mississippi and the Illinois Rivers, Father Marest mentions the Pekitanoui or Missouri and the Ouabache or Ohio. Besides these large rivers there are also a great many small streams. It is on the East bank of one of these rivers that our village is situated, between the river Ouabache and the Pekitanoui.”<sup>7</sup> From these passages it follows that the Kaskaskias were then settled at a village that was to bear their name to modern times. That the village of St. Francis Xavier was then a thing of the past, is evident from the enumeration made by Marest of the villages in the entire Illinois country: “Counting our own,” he says, “there are only three, one of which is more than a hundred leagues from here, where there are eight or nine hundred savages, and the other is on the Mississippi, twenty-five leagues from our village.”<sup>8</sup> They are in the order of their foundation, Peoria, Cahokia and Kaskaskia.

The Kaskaskia Christians had attained their end, peace and safety in a village of their own and still in the Mission of the Immaculate Conception. Sweet sounds the praise their Father gives them: “Christianity and intercourse with the French have by degrees civilized them. This is to be noticed in our Village, of which nearly all the inhabitants are Christians. It is this also which has brought many Frenchmen to settle here. And very recently we married three of them to Illinois women.”<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> “Jésuit Relations,” vol. 66, p. 122 s.

<sup>6</sup> “Jésuit Relations,” vol. 66, p. 123.

<sup>7</sup> “Jésuit Relations,” vol. 66, p. 227.

<sup>8</sup> “Jésuit Relations,” vol. 66, p. 229.

<sup>9</sup> “Jésuit Relations,” vol. 66, p. 231.

After the death of Father Bergier, pastor of Cahokia and Vicar-General of the Bishop of Quebec, the care of the French and Indians at that place also fell to the lot of Fathers Marest and Mermet, overburdened as they already found themselves. But there was another burden awaiting them, the Peoria mission on the Illinois river, vacated by Father Gravier. The great distance of the mission and the bad treatment their former pastor had received prevented frequent visits. But as the French were forbidden to trade with the rebellious Indians, the Peoria Christians were all the more anxious for a return of the Jesuit Fathers. They seemed deeply humiliated in considering the cruel treatment they had given Father Gravier. It was decided by Fathers Mermet and de Ville that Father Marest should visit the Peoria village. He set out on Friday in Easter week, 1711 accompanied by two Peoria Indians. The journey was made on foot. On the day after his departure he arrived at the Tamaroa Village. There the long journey over the prairie to the Illinois river began, no house, no bridge, no human being in sight, through briars and thorns, and at time through dense forests, ever onward, ever onward, with but brief intervals of sleep on the grass or on some leaves, living on a few ears of Indian corn, crossing rivers and creeks on improvised rafts, of a few dry sticks tied together, and in constant danger from stray war-parties, the good old Father with his companions arrived at the Illinois after twelve days of steady walking, foot-sore and exhausted. The last thirty or thirty-five miles to the Peoria Village the journey was made by a canoe some Frenchman brought down the river with fresh provisions for the Father. At the village all the chief men of the Peoria tribe came to greet Father Marest and expressed their sorrow for their past faults, with the request that he might stay with them. After a sojourn of a fortnight at the Peoria Village, Father Marest started on a journey to the Pottawatomie Village by the river St. Joseph, where Father Chardon S.J. was in charge. Here he found his elder brother, Father Joseph Marest, who was destined for the mission among the Sioux. Both Fathers Marest then journeyed to Mackinac, where they separated, Father Gabriel returning to the Kaskaskia by way of the St. Joseph and Illinois rivers.

The Peorias and their allies had spread over the entire territory which was formerly occupied by the Kaskaskias. They met Father Marest at the Fort on the Rock of the Illinois. They fired a volley from their muskets in sign of rejoicing. "Joy was actually painted on their faces," as the good Father wittily says. He was entertained at a great feast. Father Marest too rejoiced greatly and promised them he would return and stay with them. During the two days he spent in this village, Father Marest said mass in public and performed all the duties of a Missionary. It was about the end of August when he embarked to return to his mission at Kaskaskia. Swiftly did his canoe carry him down the Illinois

and the Mississippi rivers, and at last, on September 10th, he arrived at his dear mission in perfect health, after an absence of five months. When Father Marest made known to his French and Indians, that he had promised to stay with the Peorias, they would not hear of it: Accordingly Father de Ville<sup>10</sup> was sent there in his place.

Father Marest<sup>11</sup> remained with his dear Kaskaskias until his death, September 15th, 1716, one of the noblest and best of the old Jesuit Missionaries. As the editor of the *Jesuit Relations* says, "Gabriel Marest devoted himself to the civilization as well as the religious instruction of the Kaskaskia; he taught them to cultivate the soil and raise domestic animals, and rendered them the most industrious and peaceable of the western savages."<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Father de Ville's baptismal names are given as Jean Marie and by others as Louis. He belonged to the Province of Champagne, was born at Auxerre, September 8, 1672. He arrived in Canada in 1706, and died at Natchez, June 15, 1720.

<sup>11</sup> Father Marest was baptized Pierre Gabriel. He was born at Laval, Mayne, October 14, 1662, entered the Order in Paris, October 1, 1681, arrived in Canada in 1694, and died at Kaskaskia, February 15, 1714. His remains were interred in the stone church at Kaskaskia by Father Boullenger. The "*Jesuit Relations*," contain a very interesting letter in beautiful Latin about his experiences on the voyage of Bienville to Hudson's Bay.

<sup>12</sup> "*Jesuit Relations*," vol. 65, p. 265.



OLD CHURCH BELL OF KASKASKIA



## CHAPTER 9

### KASKASKIA AND ITS DEPENDENCIES

#### I.

In Southern Illinois, near the Mississippi, one hundred miles or more above the mouth of the Ohio, is situated the ancient village of Kaskaskia, supposed to be the oldest permanent European settlement in the valley of the Father of Waters.<sup>1</sup> Thus Edward G. Mason, in December 1879, alluded to the principal seat of the Church in the territory of our future diocese of St. Louis during the greater part of the eighteenth century. That the honor of being the first-born must be ceded to Cahokia, we have seen: but the village or town of old Kaskaskia itself is now no more, the yellow waters of the Mississippi, uniting with those of the Okaw or Kaskaskia River, swept away the site and the houses and all that was once the pride of the Mississippi Valley.

The first of the old village to go was the northern part. Then the houses that had been the eastern outskirts of the village began to slip into the water at flood time and disappear toward the Gulf.

In the nineties of the last century the river was running over the very ground that had once been a part of the city. The current was marching farther and farther south, and all that was left was a part of the old graveyard and half a dozen deserted cabins, with chimneys falling down, roofs gone and the very timbers slowly wearing away through the action of the sun, the rain and the wind.

Three thousand bodies were carried out of the old cemetery in 1892 and 1893. They are now buried near the ruins of old Fort Gage. A monument was erected there with this inscription:

“Those who sleep here were the first buried at Kaskaskia and afterwards removed to this cemetery. They were the early pioneers of the Mississippi Valley.”

But we are here concerned, not with the ruined present, but with the honorable past. Kaskaskia as a mission dates back to the period between 1703 and 1705. Let us follow the current of events.

It was about 1703 that the removal of the Kaskaskia and their friends and followers from the River des Peres on the Missouri side, to the Okaw river on the Illinois side was carried out under the direction of Father Marest.

---

<sup>1</sup> “Illinois in the 18th Century,” p. 1.

After the cabins of the Indians, and the more comfortable homes of the French were established, and the church and mission house of the Immaculate Conception had risen in the center of the straggling village, the work of organizing the new community proceeded. As a matter of course the missionary Fathers ruled the entire establishment of the French as well as Indians. For the Jesuits not only attended to the spiritual needs of their people, but also dispensed justice to them, and as Blanchard says, "their authority was never abused but always used with paternal care." Concerning Father Marest and his successor, Mermet, we have ample proof of this in their letters and those of their contemporaries: but it is the same with all of them. As Judge Sidney Breese clearly states the case; "No evidence is to be found, among our early records, of the exercise of any controlling power, save the Jesuits, up to the time of the grant to Crozat in 1712, and I have no idea that any such existed in the shape of government, or that there was any other social organization than that effected by them and of which they were the head."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, a blessed country, having no courts, no lawyers, no prisons, no taxes, but only the gentle sway of a loving Father. For nearly twenty years this new Kaskaskia, afterwards called the Ancient, lived a secluded, serene and contented life; only at long intervals some canoe party would arrive from Canada, bringing voyageurs and coureurs de bois and a new stock of goods to the expectant inhabitants, or a boat of two from the upper reaches of the Mississippi or Missouri with the wealth of a season of trapping and hunting and trading.

"In 1704 we find it represented that more than a hundred Canadians were scattered in small parties along the Mississippi and Missouri."<sup>3</sup>

They were hardy and brave men, these Canadians and French from France, well-fitted for the work of blazing the pathway of civilization through the primeval wilderness of forest and prairie and mountain pass. Many of the Frenchmen intermarried with the Indians of the village and founded the families that even now bear the traits of their Indian ancestry. But white girls of marriageable age were sent over by order of the king under the guardianship of Ursulines and other nuns, to be given in marriage to worthy Frenchmen of Louisiana and the Illinois country. Kaskaskia, no doubt, received its fair proportion of these godsend. Others were brought down from Canada by their husbands to become the mothers of ever multiplying families. Good wives and mothers they mostly were. In religion all professed the Catholic Faith. They knew no difference of sects, and although, perchance, not

---

<sup>2</sup> Breese, Sidney, "Early History of Illinois," p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> Parkman, "Conflict of Half a Century," vol. I, p. 354., citing letter of Bienville to the Minister, September 6, 1704.

as well instructed as their sisters in France, the teachings of the Church and, still more, the immemorial practice of piety, had a strong hold on their lives. As Monette says: "Ardently attached, as they were, to their spiritual guides, religion became one of the great rules of social life. They observed strictly all the outward rites and ceremonies of the Romish church, and their lives corresponded with their professions. Ignorant of creeds, except the "Apostles' Creed," they were not skillful disputants; but holydays and festivals were never forgotten or neglected."<sup>4</sup>

The Indian neophytes of Kaskaskia were now making speedy progress in religion and the arts of peace. Under the prudent direction of the Fathers Marest and Mermet they turned with real interest to agriculture and cattle-raising. They also became more and more devoted to prayer and the practice of religion. America's greatest historian, Bancroft, in his beautiful tribute of praise to Father James Mermet embodies some of the characteristic features of Indian life in Kaskaskia mission at this period:

"The gentle virtues and fervid eloquence of Mermet made him the soul of the mission at Kaskaskia. At early dawn his pupils came to church, dressed neatly and modestly, each in a deer-skin or robe sewed together from several skins. After receiving lessons, they chanted canticles; mass was then said in presence of all the Christians, the French and the converts—the women on one side and the men on the other. From prayers and instructions the missionaries proceeded to visit the sick and minister medicine, and their skill as physicians did more than all the rest to win confidence. In the afternoon the catechism was taught in the presence of the young and old, when everyone, without distinction of rank or age, answered the questions of the missionary. At evening all would assemble at the chapel for instruction, for prayer, and to chant the hymns of the church. On Sundays and festivals, even after vespers a homily was pronounced; at the close of the day parties would meet in houses to recite the chaplets in alternate choirs and sing psalms till late at night. Saturday and Sunday were the days appointed for confession and communion, and every convert confessed once in a fortnight. . . the success of this mission was such that marriages of the

---

<sup>4</sup> Monette, John W., "History of the Discovery and Settlement of the Valley of the Mississippi, 1846," vol. I, p. 187. One of the best standard works on the history of the Mississippi Valley, extending in time from the first Spanish discoveries in Florida to the admission of Texas into the union. It includes a relation of the French and Spanish discovery of the territory, and the association of the colonial government of these nations with the Indians, and their wars with the various tribes inhabiting it, also a narration of the Indian Wars of the states bordering the Ohio, etc.

French immigrants were sometimes solemnized with the daughters of the Illinois according to the rites of the Catholic Church.”<sup>5</sup>

When the eminent scholar and historian, Charlevoix,<sup>6</sup> arrived at the prosperous village of Kaskaskia, Oct. 12, 1721, he found there and in the immediate neighborhood four Jesuit Fathers: Joseph Francis Kereben<sup>7</sup> John Anthony Boullenger, Nicholas Ignatius de Beaubois<sup>8</sup> and John Charles Guymeneau.<sup>9</sup> The gentle Father Marest was dead, and his former assistant Father Mermet<sup>10</sup> had followed his guide and friend on September 15, 1716. The Superior of the Community was Father Guymeneau with his residence in the smaller Indian Mission two leagues distant from Kaskaskia in the interior of the country. The larger Indian mission presided over by Fathers le Boullenger and de Kereben lay on the bank of the Mississippi half a league above Fort Chartres where the Lieutenant of the King, M. de Boisbriant held forth in almost royal state. There was a chapel just outside the walls of the Fort dedicated to St. Anne, but it had no regular chaplain at the time. The Intermediate space between the Fort and what Charlevoix called “the most numerous mission” was beginning to be filled with French colonists. Two leagues farther down from Fort Chartres and about one league

<sup>5</sup> Bancroft, George, “History of the United States,” 1854, vol. III, p. 198.

<sup>6</sup> Charlevoix, Father Pierre Francois Xavier, de; a member of the Jesuit Province of France, was born at Saint Quentin, October 29, 1682, and arrived in Canada in 1705, before his ordination, returned to France for ordination, and died at La Fleche, February 1, 1716. He traveled through Canada and Louisiana, 1720-22, and laid down his impressions in his “Letters to Duchess of Lesdiguieres; Voyage to Canada and Travels through that Vast Country and Louisiana, to the Gulf of Mexico.” Much valuable information regarding Indian tribes and settlements of Lower Mississippi Valley, including character of every nation or tribe, customs, posts, forts and settlements established by the French, rivers, mines, fisheries.

<sup>7</sup> Father Joseph Francis Kereben of the Province of France, was born December 29, 1683, arrived in Canada in 1716, and was sent to the Illinois Mission, where he labored until his death, February 2, 1728.

<sup>8</sup> Father Nicholas Ignatius Beaubois was born at Orleans, October 15, 1689, and entered the Society with seventeen years. He was Pastor of the Parish Church of the Immaculate Conception at Kaskaskia from 1719 to 1724, and was the appointed Vicar-General for the Bishop of Quebec for Louisiana.

<sup>9</sup> Father John Charles Guymeneau, at this time Vicar-General of the Bishop of Quebec, for the Illinois Country, was born March 14, 1684, and entered the Society of Jesus, October 3, 1704. He arrived in Canada in 1715. The “St. Joseph Baptismal Register” shows his presence at the Miami Mission on St. Joseph River in 1722 and 1723. As Father Charlevoix’s visit fell in October 1721, Father Guymeneau must have left his place at the Illinois Mission for the Miami Mission on the River St. Joseph.

<sup>10</sup> The remains of both Fathers Marest and Mermet were removed to the stone church of Kaskaskia by Father Boullenger in 1727.

from the river was the French village of Kaskaskia, almost all its inhabitants being Canadians. Father Beaubois was the Parish Priest.

Kaskaskia was then and remained for a long time afterwards, the most important settlement in the country of the Illinois. The principal buildings, as the church, the Jesuits home with a small chapel attached, and a number of dwellings were built of stone and made a fine appearance. The "Jesuits Plantation," as Pittmann tells us, "consisted of two hundred and forty arpents of cultivated land, a very good stock of cattle and a brewery."<sup>11</sup>

"The French of Kaskaskia," Charlevoix found on his visit, "are pretty much at their ease. A Fleming, who was a servant of the Jesuits, has taught them how to sow wheat, and it thrives very well. They have some horned cattle. The Illinois Indians cultivate the lands after their fashion and are very industrious. Their women are sufficiently dexterous; they spin the buffalo's wool and make it as fine as that of the English sheep. Sometimes one would even take it for silk. They make stuffs of it, which they dye black, yellow and dark red; they make gowns of it, which they sew with thread made of the sinews of the roebuck. They expose these to the sun for three days, and when dry, beat them, and draw out threads of great fineness.

"All the country is open. It consists of vast prairies, which extend for twenty-five leagues, and are separated by little groves that are all of good wood."<sup>12</sup>

"Father Charlevoix was so well pleased with what he saw and heard at Kaskaskia, that he prolonged his stay for a month. He reached the mouth of the Ohio about the 15th of November 1721."

Kaskaskia, the Illinois Mission, became within twenty years after its foundation the center of a cluster of villages each one a new center of Catholic life. Fort Chartres, with its chapel dedicated to St. Anne, gathered around its walls a large population, and became the historic Parish of St. Anne of Fort Chartres. Prairie du Rocher had its beginning in 1734 when St. Joseph's Mortuary Chapel was erected near the bluffs, to be used as a chapel of ease by the people of Fort Chartres. The village and Church of St. Philippe a short distance northeast of Fort Chartres was founded about 1723 by Philip Francis Renault, the Director General of the mining operations of the "Royal Company

---

<sup>11</sup> Pittman, Captain Philip, "The Present State of the European Settlements on the Mississippi," p. 85. The book was originally published in London, 1770. Pittman "saw the Illinois villages just before they were deserted by the French and before the coming of the Americans."

<sup>12</sup> Charlevoix, English Translation, p. 303. Cf. Wallace, "History of Illinois and Louisiana Under the French Rule," p. 210.

of the Indies." A very good highway connected these settlements with Cahokia, forming an almost continuous stretch of human habitations along the Mississippi, where, at the opening of the century, nothing but primeval forest stood in its wild loneliness and grandeur.

Fort Chartres was built in 1720 by Pierre Dugue Sieur de Boisbriant, Royal Commandant in Illinois. It was erected at the expense of the company of the Indies, at a spot about sixteen miles N. W. of Kaskaskia, and a mile from the Mississippi. The fort was at first built of wood; but it was rebuilt in heavy stone masonry (1753-1756), by the Chevalier MaCarthy according to the plans of M. Saucier<sup>13</sup> at a cost of over 5,000,000 livres; it was thenceforth, with the village which had grown up around, called New Chartres. The Fort was occupied by the Illinois Commandant, and later, by a British garrison.

The Church of St. Anne was attended by the Jesuit Fathers of Kaskaskia. In the Register of Baptisms the first entry is that of Nicholas Ignatius Beaubois, who was the superior of the Jesuits in the Illinois. In 1725 and 1726 we find the name of Father Le Boullenger. From ⑦ 1726 to 1843 there occurs a gap in the records. After that the Seminary Priests of Cahokia, Joseph Gagnon and Nicholas Laurent, who styles himself "Missionarius Apostolicus," performed priestly functions at St. Anne's until 1749, when St. Anne's seems to have fallen under an interdict, probably on account of intrusions by priests of the Foreign Mission into the Territory of the Jesuits. Further particulars are not obtainable. From 1757 to 1759 Forget Duverger, Vicar General for the Bishop of Quebec and Missionary Apostolic, signs his name as "Curé of St. Anne's." During this period the names of Recollet Hyppolyte Collet, the Jesuits Hubert and Aubert, occur in regular succession, then Collet once more, until in 1764 and 1765 the name of the Recollet Luke Collet occurs regularly until his death, September 10, 1765.

The Fort and Village of New Chartres was surrendered by its Commandant, St. Ange the Bellerive to the English under Captain Sterling, October 10, 1765. The last parish priests of St. Anne's of Fort Chartres, the Recollet Father Luke Collet, had a very checkered career. His baptismal name was Leonard Philibert. He was born November 3, 1715, and was ordained in Quebec, Feb. 24, 1752. In 1755 he was chaplain of the Fort at Presqu' Isle (Erie) and at the River aux Boeufs. In 1759 he acted as chaplain in the French army, was made prisoner by the English, and was brought over to England. In 1760 he regained his freedom and passed over to France. On his return to

---

<sup>13</sup> Cf. "Captain John B. Saucier at Fort Chartres, Ill., 1751-1763" by John F. Snyder. Also, "Destruction of Kaskaskia by the Mississippi River," by J. B. Burkham, both published in the "Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society."

America he went to labor among the Illinois Indians. We learn from a letter of Father Meurin, a Jesuit, addressed to the Bishop of Quebec, and dated June 11, 1753 from Kaskaskia, Illinois, that Father Luke, the Recollet, had been buried in the Cemetery of St. Anne, at Fort Chartres. This Mission having been destroyed during the invasion of the Mississippi Valley, Father Meurin had his body taken up and carried to Prairie du Rocher. There it is that this dauntless missionary slumbers in peace, and most probably, in the church of that place."<sup>14</sup> When the Mission of St. Anne was destroyed, a part of the inhabitants withdrew to Prairie du Rocher, and the rest to the new parish of St. Louis, in Missouri. The vestments and sacred vessels were likewise carried to the chapel of Prairie du Rocher. Father Luke Collet was a brother of Rev. Charles Angelus Collet, Canon of the Quebec Cathedral. It was this Father Collet that officiated at the funeral ceremonies of the Marquis de Montcalm, in the Ursuline Church in Quebec. The two Collet brothers could not conceal their regret at seeing Canada pass under the sway of the English; they were, on that account, suspected by the British authorities, and obliged to quit the country. It seems however, that after the peace of 1763, the Collet brothers were at liberty to return to Canada. It is thought that they were natives of that country."<sup>15</sup>

The mortuary chapel at Prairie du Rocher built near the cemetery in 1734 with St. Joseph as its patron, soon attracted a number of French families from the banks of the Mississippi to the higher and more salubrious location at the foot of the bluffs. The massive walls of Fort Chartres were gradually falling a prey to the continuous attacks on their foundations by the waters of the Mississippi River, and the church of St. Anne had to be abandoned about 1788. It was then that St. Joseph's of Prairie du Rocher became the parish church of the district. As to the priests who held services in the Church of St. Joseph, it is plain that they cannot be designated as pastors, Prairie du Rocher itself being but a chapel of ease and no parish church. But the records show a regular succession of well-known names. Beginning, with 1721 and reaching unto 1743 the names of the Jesuits J. L. Boullenger and N. I. De Beaubois appear on the fragmentary records. From 1743 to 1758 the Seminary priests Joseph Gagnon and Nicholas Laurens are very much in evidence. Father Gagnon kept all his registers in one book, but on June 30, 1757 the Rev. Forget Duverger, Curé de St. Anne, opens separate books for Baptisms, Marriages and Interments. Father Forget Duverger's name appears here for the last time on June 15, 1759.

---

<sup>14</sup> Chronicle of the Canadian Clergy, and Archives of the Archbishop of Quebec.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem.

The Recollets Hyppolyte and Luke Collet now enter upon the scene to be succeeded by the last of the old Jesuits in the Valley, Sebastian Louis Meurin.

It is evident from this that St. Anne's of New Chartres and St. Joseph's of Prairie du Rocher were but one parish attended by the same priests, suffering the same changes of fortune and only changing its center of gravity from the river to the bluffs.

## CHAPTER 10

### KASKASKIA AND ITS DEPENDENCIES.

#### II.

The colony of Louisiana was indeed a proud possession of the crown of France; yet, strange to say, its government required a large subsidy every year. Iberville and his brother Bienville certainly did not meet expectations as financiers. Their constant appeals for help at last disgusted the Grande Monarque, who had so many other causes and persons to support. He determined to give away, free of charge; for better for worse; for richer, for poorer, the entire realm of Louisiana with all its lands and rivers and posts, with all its mines and forests and prairies, with all its inhabitants, white and copper-colored. Only the sovereignty was to remain with the king. A gentleman of Paris, Sieur Anthony Crozat, a merchant prince of the Venetian type, was singled out for the magnificent gift. The Letters-Patent granted by Louis XIV to Crozat in September of 1712 were of the widest character. This grant was, it may be said, the first attempt to develop the great central region of the United States. Crozat's ships only could trade with all "Louisiana," which is described as "Bounded by New Mexico and by the Lands of the English of Carolina . . . . The River St. Louis, heretofore called the Mississippi, from the edge of the Sea as far as the Illinois; together with the River of St. Philip, heretofore called the Missourys, and of St. Jerome, heretofore called Ouabache (Wabash), with all the Countries, Territories, Lakes, within land, and the Rivers which fall directly or indirectly into that part of the River of St. Louis."<sup>1</sup>

The gift was made for fifteen successive years, and included the absolute and exclusive right to open mines and search for precious stones, and to trade in all commodities with the French and the savages and also to lay out and cultivate plantations. "If he should find it proper to have blacks in the said country of Louisiana," says one article of the contract between King Louis XIV and Sieur Crozat, "he may send a ship every year to trade for them directly upon the coast of Guinea, and he may sell those blacks to the inhabitants of the colony of Louisiana."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Crozat's Charter is given in Wallace "Illinois and Louisiana," pp. 233 to 238. Extracts are given in Martin's "History of Louisiana," C. VIII.

<sup>2</sup> Article XIV of Crozat's Charter, Wallace, p. 237.

The Sieur Anthony Crozat was very proud of his new honors, but also very hopeful of emoluments from his vast possessions. Yet finding after a brief space of time, that the increase of his honors was in inverse proportion to the results of his venture, he returned the Danaan gift to the King.

Crozat resigned his charter in 1717: it was then granted by the Regent, the Duke of Orleans, to the manipulator of finances, John Law, for the "Company of the West." The celebrated ventures of this company and its head led to the bursting of the Mississippi Bubble. That is the gorgeous rise and fall of the new colonization efforts in Louisiana. The following year brought eight hundred immigrants to Dauphine Island, the nucleus of the future city of New Orleans.

Shiploads after shiploads of human freight for the colonization of the Mississippi Valley arrived. Many of the poor engagés perished of sickness, exposure and want. Law himself established a seigniorship on a vast prairie on the Arkansas River and sent there thousands of Catholic Palatines. But in 1720 the downfall of Law led to the discovery that the Mississippi Company was bankrupt, and a new organization, the "Royal Company of the Indies," was effected and took over the assets and liabilities of the "Company of the West."

The large accessions of French and German colonists brought on a few changes in Kaskaskia's peaceful life. In 1720 the congregation of the French Catholics was raised to the dignity of a canonical parish, with all the rights and duties implied in the title. In 1721 a college was founded in the parish which continued to flourish until 1765. There were 400 French and 250 negroes under Father Watrin's pastoral charge. The city itself was fairly prosperous, and the people, as a consequence, more pleasure-loving than before. In 1749 there were five Jesuit Fathers at the residence of Kaskaskia. Father Alexander Xavier de Guienne was Superior, his assistants were the Fathers Joseph Julius Fourré, Louis Vivier, Philibert Watrin, Sebastin Meurin and Brother Charles Magendi.

The purpose of converting the Indians to the Faith was never absent from the minds of the French. In the Letters-Patent, issued to the "Company of the West" the fifty-third clause reads as follows: "As we regard especially the glory of God by procuring the salvation of the inhabitants, Indians and Negroes, whom we desire to be instructed in the true religion, the said Company shall be obliged to build at its own expense churches at the places where it forms settlements, and also maintain a necessary number of ecclesiastics, either with the rank of parish priests, or such others, as shall be suitable, in order to preach the Gospel there, perform the Divine Service and administer the sacraments, all under the authority of the Bishop of Quebec, and said colony

remaining in his Diocese as heretofore, and the parish-priests and other ecclesiastics which the Company shall maintain there, shall be at his nomination and patronage.”<sup>3</sup>

“By ordinance issued May 16th, 1722, by the commissioners of the Council, with the consent of the Bishop of Quebec, the Province of Louisiana was divided into three spiritual jurisdictions, the first comprised the banks of the Mississippi from the Gulf to the mouth of the Ohio, and included the region to the West between these latitudes. The Capuchins were to officiate in the churches and missions of this district, and their Superior was to reside in New Orleans. The second district comprised all the territory north of the Ohio, and was assigned to the charge of the Jesuits, whose headquarters were to be in the Illinois. The districts west of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi was assigned to the Carmelites. The residence of their Superior was ordinarily to be at Mobile. Each of the three Superiors was to be a Grand Vicar of the Bishop of Quebec.

By ordinance of the Bishop of Quebec, issued Dec. 19th, 1722, the district of the Carmelites was added to that of the Capuchins. The Carmelites then returned to France. In December 1723, the northern boundary of this district was changed to Natchez, and all the country north of that point, to the east, and to the west, was put under the Jesuits.”<sup>4</sup>

The spiritual administration of the Illinois country as well as of Lower Louisiana and Canada was still with the Bishop of Quebec. He was, however, represented by Grand Vicars in the various parts of his Diocese. The only change was that the Superior of the Jesuits came to reside in New Orleans. Consequently we find Father Kerreben in that city from 1723 to 1725 and Father Beaubois from 1725 to 1728.

“The Sieur de Boisbriant made numerous grants of land in the Illinois country by virtue of Letters-Patent issued by the Company of the West and its successor the Royal Company of the Indies. Then each of the villages within his jurisdiction obtained large parcels of land in their immediate vicinity, which were to serve as Common-field for the inhabitants. Kaskaskia, Nouvelle Chartres, Prairie du Rocher, Prairie du Pont, each had its Commons, granted to them by the Company of the Indies. Land was plentiful, and the settlers were clamorous. But the defense of the settlements against hostile Indians was costly, whilst the trade became more and more unprofitable. The Company, therefore solicited leave to surrender the Mississippi Wilderness. On the 10th of April 1732, the jurisdiction and control over its commerce reverted

3 Shea, “The Catholic Church in Colonial Days,” pp. 562 and 563.

4 “Narrative and Critical History of America,” (Justin Winsor), vol. V, p. 43.

to the Crown of France." Bienville, once more took charge of the reins of government in New Orleans in 1735.

In 1732 there arrived in the Illinois, accompanied by a numerous company of miners and San Domingo slaves, Philip Francois de Renault, newly-appointed Director General of the Mines of the Royal India Company in Illinois. There were five hundred negro slaves that came with Renault, the first contingent of the black invasion of Missouri and Illinois. He proceeded to Kaskaskia and in 1720 he built the village called St. Philip. He led his prospectors and miners, white, and black across the river to the district of Ste. Genevieve where they discovered a number of lead-mines that had been worked superficially by the Indians and visited by La Mothe Cadillac.

The large influx of people of all classes and conditions of life that set in with the immigration propaganda conducted by Law and his associates, though in the main beneficial to the colony itself, proved to be a serious detriment to religion and public morals. One of the last acts of the Bishop Saint Vallier of Quebec was a serious warning to the people of the Mississippi Valley in regard to the disregard of religion and purity in which the French recently arrived from France live in the vast country which they have come to inhabit along that great River. He then orders all those who under his authority have the conduct of souls to inveigh against those who were giving public scandal by impiety in words or by their actions and by public concubinage. These public sinners should not be admitted to the church or to the sacraments, but should be subjected to public penance. The Circular Letter is dated July 19, 1721.<sup>5</sup>

The introduction of Negro and Indian slavery into Louisiana by the French government also had an evil influence on the moral tone of the community and tended to involve the Illinois country where peace had ever reigned, in the Indian wars. Sometime in the summer of 1720 Boisbriant removed to Fort Chartres, and Kaskaskia ceased to be the seat of government. In 1725 he became Acting Governor and went to New Orleans. In 1730 St. Ange de Bellerive was Commandant and Major Pierre D'Artaguiette, his lieutenant in the Illinois country. One cold day in January 1736 the news came from New Orleans that a great campaign was to be commenced against the Chicasaws, who had committed many a brutal deed against the colonists on the river. At the call to arms the Sieur de Vinsennes with his French militia and a troop of Miami Indians came to join D'Artaguiette. The Cahokias and Mitchigameas too were summoned. The Kaskaskias were dancing the war-dance in their villages making ready for the fray. The trappers and hunters from the Missouri took gun and powder-bag and knife and

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Shea, "The Catholic Church in Colonial Days," p. 560 s.

hastened to the rendezvous at Fort Chartres. At last the preparations are completed and the expedition is to start. It is late in February 1736. Mass was said, and the people, old and young, hurried to the river to see the little army take to the boats. D'Artaguiette and the Jesuit Father Senat led the way, as the flotilla departed amid the cheers of the bystanders. A few weeks later the Cahokias under the command of Moncheval passed the village on the same errand. There followed long days of anxious waiting for news from the distant field of action. It was a Sunday in June, the morning services at the church were just finished, when a messenger ran up to announce the disaster that had overtaken the combined forces of D'Artaguiette and Vincennes. They had waited for Bienville and Moncheval, but they did not come. And so, the brave men from Kaskaskia and the Wabash marched to the attack. The Chicasaws were awaiting them at their town. The French fought bravely but the Miamis betrayed them and the Illinois and Missouris ran away. D'Artaguiette received a deadly wound just as victory seemed to be assured. The Sieur de Vincennes and Father Senat would not forsake their wounded friends. They were taken prisoners by the Chicasaws, together with fifteen others. Of their heroic end Monette writes this beautiful account:

“D'Artaguiette and his valiant companions who fell into the hands of the Chicasaws were treated with great kindness and attention; their wounds dressed by the Indians, who watched over them with fraternal tenderness, and they were received into the cabins of the victors in hopes of a great ransom from Bienville, who was known to be advancing by way of the Tombigby with a powerful army. But the same day brought the intelligence of the advance and the discomfiture of the commander-in-chief St. Ange de Bellerive. His retreat and final departure soon followed and the Chicasaws, elated with their success, and despairing of the expected ransom, resolved to sacrifice the victims to savage triumph and revenge. The prisoners were taken to a neighboring field, and while one was left to relate their fate to their countrymen, the young and intrepid D'Artaguiette, and the heroic Vincennes, whose name is borne by the oldest town in Indiana, and will be perpetuated as long as the Wabash shall flow by the dwellings of civilized men, and the faithful Senat, true to his mission, were, with their companions, each tied to a stake. Here they were tortured before slow and intermitting fires, until death mercifully released them from their protracted torments.”<sup>6</sup>

All honor to the Jesuit Senat who might have fled, but remained to receive the last sigh of the wounded, regardless of danger, and mindful only of duty.

---

<sup>6</sup> Monette, “Valley of the Mississippi,” vol. I, p. 288. Also, Martin's Louisiana, p. 304.

But like honor also to the heroic priests who remained at home to guide and comfort the souls entrusted to their care, the Jesuit Fathers D'Outreleau and his companions, Boullenger and Guymeneau, the Superior who was sick unto death in the days of anxious waiting. They too, no doubt, would have been equal to the heroic duty fulfilled by Father Antoine Senat, if they had received the call. For was not their whole life a continual martyrdom for the cause of Christ? If it be true, that "they also serve, who only stand and wait," it must be true in the highest sense that these Jesuits, who whilst waiting for a call to martyrdom, did not only stand ready, but went about, like their Lord and Leader, doing good. From 1735 to 1741 Father Etienne D'Outreleau signs himself as Pastor of the Immaculate Conception. His successor is Father Rene Tartarin from 1741 to 1747, to be followed by Philibert F. Watrin 1759. In this year Father Watrin becomes Superior of the Mission and remains in office until 1762. Father Jean B. Aubert is given as pastor of the Immaculate Conception from 1759 to 1764. Father Meurin is in charge of the Indians until 1764. Father Louis Vivier wrote two very interesting letters from among the Illinois, the one dated June 8, 1750 and the other November 17, 1750. A few extracts will no doubt, be acceptable.

"When the first missionaries came among the Illinois" he writes, "they counted five thousand persons of all ages in that Nation. Today we count but two thousand."

In regard to the Illinois country, he tells us, "There are 5 French villages and 3 villages of Savages within a distance of 21 leagues, between the Mississippi and the river called the Kaskaskias. In the five French villages there may be eleven hundred white people, three hundred black, and about sixty red slaves, otherwise savages. The three Illinois villages do not contain more than eight-hundred Savages, of all ages."<sup>7</sup>

But Father Vivier's thoughts are not confined to his own nation of the Illinois. There are many Indians towards the West who are also called to be God's children.

"Among the Nations of the Missouri are some who seem to be specially disposed to receive the Gospel; as, for instance, the Panismahas. One of the gentlemen of whom I have just spoken wrote one day to a Frenchman who traded among the Savages and asked him in his letter to baptize dying children. When the chief of the village perceived the letter, he said to the Frenchman: 'What is the news?' 'There is none,' replied the latter. 'How,' retorted the Savage, 'because our color is red can we not know the news?' 'It is the black Chief,' replied the

---

<sup>7</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 69, p. 149.

<sup>8</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 69, p. 150.

Frenchman, 'who writes, recommending me to baptize dying children, in order to send them to the great Spirit.' The Savage chief, thoroughly satisfied, said to him: 'Be not anxious I myself undertake to notify thee whenever a child is in danger of death.' He gathered his people together and said to them: 'What think ye of this Black Chief?' (For that is the name which they give to the missionaries.) 'We have never seen him; we have never done him any good; he dwells far from us, beyond the sun. And yet he thinks of our village; he wishes to do good to us; and, when our children die, he wishes to send them to the great Spirit. This Black Chief must be very good.'<sup>9</sup>

Love and sympathy for the poor, the widow and the orphan also found lodgment in the heart of this Savage, as Vivier writes: "Some traders who came from his village have mentioned to me instances which prove, that savage though he is, he none the less possesses intelligence and good sense. At the death of his predecessor all the suffrages of his Nation were in his favor. At first, he excused himself from accepting the position of Chief; but at last on being compelled to acquiesce, he said to them: "You desire then that I should be your Chief; I consent, but you must bear in mind that I wish to be your Chief in reality, and that I must be faithfully obeyed in that capacity. Hitherto the widows and orphans have been left destitute. I intend that in future their wants shall be provided for; and, in order that they may not be forgotten, I desire and intend that they shall be the first to get their share."<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 69, p. 225.

<sup>10</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 69, p. 225.

## CHAPTER 11

### ST. GENEVIEVE AND ITS DEPENDENCIES

More than fifty years before the foundation of St. Louis under the direction of Pierre Laclède-Liquet and Auguste Chouteau, the mines of La Motte and Meramec engrossed the attention, not only of the French circles of Kaskaskia and Cahokia, but also of the nobles and even the royal court of France. The reign of Louis XIV and the regency of the Duke of Orleans had proved disastrous to the finances of the country. The Scotchman John Law was heralded as the great financial genius, who would, in some mysterious way, save the state, and lead it to the highest pinnacle of wealth and prosperity. For was not America infinitely rich in precious metals and pearls? New France was to be the pledge for the ever increasing debts of Old France. But promises would not satisfy forever. The gold and silver and other treasure must be found and sent to the coffers of the King. The peltries of the western world were, indeed, a source of wealth; yet gold and silver were immeasurably better. As Spain had grown rich and powerful by the gold and silver of Peru and Mexico, so France must find the overflowing fountain of infinite treasure in the mines of the Mississippi Valley. The wish was father of the thought: absolute need was the mother of conviction.

It was the first Governor of Louisiana under the Royal Company, the *Sieur de la Mothe Cadillac*, who actually visited the mineral region of the Mine La Mothe in Madison County in 1715, sinking a shaft there and taking out lead and silver ore. After him, in July, 1719, came a company of noble prospectors from Kaskaskia under the leadership of the *Sieur Mare Antoine de la Loire des Ursins* to the mining country of South-east Missouri. They were brought there by some Tamaroa guides over the Indian trail through the valley of the Saline, near whose headwaters La Mothe Cadillac had opened his mine in 1715.

In 1723 M. la Renaudier sent a report on the Mines of La Mothe and to the French government at Paris, from which it appears that both were being worked, but required for profitable production the help of slave labor. These slaves five hundred in number were brought to the mines by Philip Renault in 1723. They form the advance-guard of the large negro population of Missouri. From that time on until the present day the Mine a la Motte near the headwaters of the Saline, and the mines on the Southeastern tributary of the Meramec river, called the Riviere Negro, which preceded the present towns of Potosi, Old Mines and Mine a la Renault were, from the start, dependent on Kaskaskia's first born daughter, Ste. Genevieve, for commerce as well as spiritual succor.

The gateways to these earliest European settlements in the interior of Missouri, the mouth of the Saline Creek, on the south, and the mouth of the Meramec to the north, were easily accessible from St. Genevieve, which gradually arose on the fruitful bottom lands that skirted the river between the Saline and the Gabori creeks.<sup>1</sup>

"The old Village of St. Genevieve" is called by the most eminent historian of Missouri "the first permanent settlement in Upper Louisiana."<sup>2</sup> This claim cannot be upheld; for even if the Post of Arkansas be counted for Lower Louisiana, Marest and Pinet's Kaskaskia, the village of French traders on the River des Peres, must be accorded precedence.<sup>3</sup> Yet the quaint old town of St. Genevieve has a long and interesting history. The old village, however, did not occupy the present site. It was three miles lower down, the river, and hard on its alluvial banks. In fact, the original site has long since fallen into the water. Yet there is enough land remaining of the so called Big Field, on the edge of which the Village stood, that we can form an idea of its former location. The date of the foundation of the Old Village is not positively known. There are a number of guesses with a foundation in fact. But, it must be remembered that there was no formal act or ceremony of foundation, but only a slow accretion of human habitations, on and near Francis Rivard's grant in the Big Field, which he held on condition, that he would eventually set aside a portion of it for a church. This grant was made in 1752 by Chevalier Makarty, Commandant of Fort Chartres and builder of the magnificent stone fort of that name. Other equally early settlers on the Big Field are Toussaint Geneaux, Chaponga and Dorlac.<sup>4</sup> Zenon Trudeau says in his report of 1798 that the Old Village "Was settled more than sixty years ago."<sup>5</sup> This would place the first settlement on the Big Field in 1738. Pittman, an English Officer who wrote in 1767 says: "The first settlers of the village removed about twenty-eight years ago from Kaskaskia,"<sup>6</sup> that is, in 1739. As early as 1759 a Fort known as St. Joachim was located in the village of Ste. Genevieve as the Church Records show. Father Watrin's account<sup>7</sup> places the

---

<sup>1</sup> For documents in proof of these statements, cf. "Earliest History of Mine La Motte" by John Rothensteiner in "Missouri's Historical Review," vol. XXI, pp. 199-213.

<sup>2</sup> Louis Houck, "The History of Missouri," vol. I, p. 337.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the 5th Chapter of this History, "The Kaskaskias on the River des Peres."

<sup>4</sup> Louis Houck, "A History of Missouri," vol. I, p. 338.

<sup>5</sup> Trudeau's Report "Concerning the Settlements of the Spanish Illinois Country, 1798" may be found in Houck's "Spanish Regime in Missouri," vol. II, p. 247.

<sup>6</sup> "Mississippi Settlements," p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> "Banishment of the Jesuits," by Father Watrin, in "Jesuit Relations," vol. 70, p. 233.

establishment of what was then the new village, halfway between that of Trudeau—Pittman 1738-39, and that of the St. Genevieve Church Record 1758-59, or in other words at 1748 or 1749. It would seem then, (1) that the first grants of land in the Big Field were made two or three years previous to that of Francis Rivard, (2) that the number of houses clustering around the church lot had grown sufficiently numerous in 1749 to be called a village, and, (3) that the Spanish government thought it advisable to place a fort in the village sometime before 1759. Father Watrin called the village Ste. Genevieve: the Church Records call the Fort St. Joachim. Both designations of course, are historical. But whatever we may think of this calculation, this fact is beyond dispute: the Catholic Church was organized in Ste. Genevieve by the Jesuit Father Philibert Watrin in 1749, who had, no doubt, even prior to that year, come over from Kaskaskia on errands of charity to the sick and dying. When the first church was built we cannot tell. Father Watrin simply says, that the petition of the villagers to have a church built was granted them; and that after this his visits became still more frequent. In a Marriage Record dated February 26, 1759, he called the church St. Joachim. He calls the people his new parishioners; but he did not take up his residence with them, as he was pastor of Kaskaskia, and they had no house for the priest. He must, however, cross the Mississippi in a canoe. Sometimes a storm would overtake him in his frail craft on the surging waters. But Father Watrin never failed in his duty, for more than fifteen years. At last, only a few years before the banishment of all the Jesuit Fathers, the people built a parish residence, and a special Pastor was assigned to them as their first resident priest. The Record of Marriages in St. Genevieve opens with the name of Father Watrin, Father Morinie's following on January 1763:

1759, Feb. 26th, Andre Deguire, dit Larose, Captain of Militia of the Fort of St. Joachim, to Marie La Boissiere, widow of Joseph Baron, of the Parish of St. Ann of Fort Chartres.

(signed) Watrin

1760, Feb. 5th, Jean Baptiste Deguire, son of Andre Deguire and the deceased Elizabeth Brunet, to Cecil Baron, daughter of the deceased Joseph Baron and Marie La Boissiere.

(signed) Watrin

1761, Jan. 7th, Andre Manterol, native of the town of St. Sebastian, to Angélique Pethius, widow of Etienne Govreau.

(signed) Watrin

1763, Jan. 10th, Pierre Aubuchon, son of Pierre Aubuchon and Marie Brunet, to Charlotte Lalande, widow of LeCompt, daughter of Charlotte Marchaud and Jean Baptiste Lalande.

(signed) La Morinie

The two first names that occur after that of Father Watrin in the Registers of Ste. Genevieve are Father Jean B. de la Morinie and Father Jean B. Salleneuve, both of the Society of Jesus. Neither one nor the other were members of the Illinois Mission. Father Morinie was born at Perigeux in France, October 24, 1704, and after becoming a member of the Society of Jesus, came to Canada in 1738. His name occurs in the Records of St. Anne, Detroit, in those of Mackinac from 1738-1752. After that he had charge of the Miami Mission at St. Joseph in what is now Niles, Michigan, from which the Indian war compelled him to flee in 1761. Hence he came to the Illinois country, and had only taken charge of the Church of Ste. Genevieve through the motive of a zeal that refuses itself nothing. From this it would appear that Father Jean de la Morinie was the first resident priest and quasi-pastor of Ste. Genevieve.<sup>8</sup> His companion in the care of this church, Father Jean B. Salleneuve came to Canada in 1743, at the age of thirty-five years, and was assigned to the Huron Mission near Detroit. He remained there until March 1761, when he, too, was compelled by the disturbances of the time to seek refuge in the Illinois country. Both Fathers, though only guests of the Illinois Mission, and in no wise under the control of the Superior Council of New Orleans, were expelled from the Country and sent back to France in 1764.<sup>9</sup>

On February 28th, 1764, Father John B. Aubert, then Pastor of Kaskaskia, makes an entry on the Record: on May 14th, S. L. Meurin, Missionary Priest; and from October 4th, 1768 to April 1772 alternately Fathers Meurin and Gibault. On May 18th, 1772, there occurs the name of the first resident priest of St. Louis, the Spanish Capuchin Valentin. On August 25th, 1772, we find his name once more with the designation: "Priest of St. Louis and its dependencies." Father Meurin, the Pastor of the place, since his return from New Orleans in 1765, was not allowed to officiate there on account of his having accepted from Quebec the office of Vicar General of the Illinois Country. The Spanish Commandant, Rocheblave, would not tolerate a priest who had his faculties from a foreign Bishop. But Rocheblave himself was discharged by the Spaniards in 1769, and entering the service of the English, received the appointment as Commandant of Kaskaskia, where George Rogers Clarke caught him napping on the night of July 4th, 1778. Don Francisco Vallé, received the appointment as Civil and Military Commandant of St. Genevieve in 1769. In 1772 the village numbered 404 whites and 387 slaves. On the 15th of November 1773, the newly

---

<sup>8</sup> "The St. Joseph Baptismal Record," edited by Rev. George Paré, and M. M. Quaife, in "Mississippi Valley Historical Review," vol. 13, No. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Father Salleneuve is mentioned in the "Jesuit Catalogue of 1756," with date of birth, (June 14, 1708), and of entrance into the Order, (September 21, 1727), as being stationed "in remote regions."

appointed Pastor of the parish of St. Genevieve, the Capuchin Hilaire de Genevaux, performed his first priestly function in the village church.<sup>10</sup> Sometime before this date he had figured in a violent quarrel with Father Baudouin, S. J. the Vicar-General of the Bishop of Quebec, about the Vicar-Generalship in Louisiana, which he claimed, belonged to him, asserting that the Bishop of Quebec had only the right to oversee and to give encouragement, and no more. He had appealed to Rome for a decision: but received none. Yet, he returned as apostolic Prothonotary, and caused more trouble to the Jesuit Vicar-General. When the Jesuits were banished in 1763, the Superior of the Capuchins, Father Dagobert de Longwi became Vicar-General of Quebec for Louisiana. The restless Father Hilaire soon got into a quarrel with Father Dagobert also, from which Father Dagobert emerged victorious.<sup>11</sup> Father Hilary may have considered his appointment to the village in the far northern wilderness as an exile, and consequently took little interest in the administration of the parish. On June 6, 1774, the habitants of Ste. Genevieve sent a remonstrance against Father Hilary to Don Pedro Piernas, the lieutenant Governor:

"The undersigned habitants of Saint Genevieve find it necessary to demand your justice against an attempt of Father Hilary. If that attempt were carried out, it would deprive them of their lands. We were strangely surprised on hearing him announce to us last Sunday that we were to pay him the tenth of all the produce of our lands, although he is not at all ignorant that hitherto we have paid no more than the twenty-sixth part; that a constant and uninterrupted custom has, without doubt, been regulated to our days by the royal power and the ecclesiastical assembly; and that His Catholic Majesty, fortunately, and according to all the wise laws to which we are and always shall be very submissive, has not considered it advisable to inform us that he has changed anything in this regard. Consequently, it cannot be annulled by one single religious. We are surprised at seeing this attempt made by a religious, who, since he has been among us, has given no instruction to the children or preached a sermon or given an exhortation to his parishioners. We have not in any way endeavored to relax the old custom in regard to Father Hilary, and we would be willing, if our power permitted, to make a greater sacrifice, but our poverty does not permit us to do it, for we find it very difficult to support our families. We pay a fifth (a royal tax) to the mill (i. e. the fifth of the meal ground as a toll) as well as the defence of our boundaries; the beadle serves him for twenty sols per livre; labor is excessively dear, as well as the things

<sup>10</sup> "The Spanish Regime in Missouri," vol. I, p. 54.

<sup>11</sup> The struggle of Father Hilaire de Genevaux against the Jesuits and then against his superior Father Dagobert is authentically, though not always judicially, discussed by the historian of Louisiana, "The Spanish Domination," pp. 49-94.

of the first and indispensable need. Another surprise on our part was for us to hear that Father Hilary has forbidden us all spiritual aid from the religious of the other bank (of the river) in his absence. We are unaware of the reason which imposes so severe a law upon us."<sup>12</sup> The complaint was forwarded to Don Louis de Unzaga, the Governor, who answered on February 20, 1775, that, the custom shall not be altered in any way, and that is it not right, while the King supports the parish priests, for them to expect another fee, which would mean a double compensation and a very large one."<sup>13</sup>

The Apostolic Prothonotary's negligence in keeping the Records in good order was severely reprimanded by his Superior, Bishop Cyrillo de Barcelona, acting for the Bishop of Havana, Cuba. Father Bernard de Limpach, was ordered to go to St. Genevieve to enter all the missing records of Baptisms and Marriages. This was done in September 1778. From October 1778 to May 1786, Father Pierre Gibault, signing himself "priest," administered all the baptisms, being accepted by the Spanish authorities as administrator of the Parish until a pastor could be sent from New Orleans.

On September 27, 1778, the parishioners of the old village, in a meeting held under the auspices of the Commandant, de Cartabona, and the Parish Priest of St. Louis and its Dependencies, P. Bernard de Limpach, decided to remove the Church from the river bank to a more elevated location on the land of Charles Valle. In the year of 1782, the inhabitants of the Old Village, fearing the encroachment of the river, began "peu a peu," as Father Dahmen says, to remove their homes three miles northward to the more elevated ground of the present site of Ste. Genevieve. In the year of the great waters, "L' Annee des Grandes Eaux." Father de Saint Pierre arrived from Vincennes and remained until his house in Cahokia should be completed. (May 18th, 1785-July 10th, 1786.) On September 11th, 1786, Father Louis Guignes, of the Order of Capuchins, appears on the scene and remains as Pastor of St. Genevieve and its Dependencies until November, 1788. One of these dependencies, is the old Parish of the Post of Arkansas, the cherished foundation of Henri de Tonti. Father Guignes, as Pastor of St. Genevieve, visited the place a few times during his incumbency and administered the sacrament of Baptism to thirty-seven persons, eleven of whom were Indians. Five marriages also were solemnized on these occasions. Father Guignes had his residence in the new village in a house that was bought from M. Roussin, and was fitted up for a presbytere. Father Paul de Saint Pierre succeeded to the pastorate of St. Genevieve in 1789.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "The Spanish Regime in Missouri," vol. I, p. 121 s.

<sup>13</sup> "The Spanish Regime in Missouri," vol. I, p. 125.

<sup>14</sup> M. S. material in "Spanish Archives" in possession of Missouri Historical Society.

## BANISHMENT OF THE JESUITS

This chapter records the final act of the wonderful drama of divine inspiration enacted by the Jesuit Fathers in the Mississippi Valley, from the last quarter of the seventeenth, to almost the last quarter of the eighteenth Centuries. Like the story of the Jesuit Missions on the St. Lawrence river and in the Lake Regions,<sup>1</sup> it is a story of seeming failure after glorious successes attained by "the faith, daring and religious zeal of the brave sons of St. Ignatius." Its pioneer saint, the heroic Father Marquette, started out on his voyage of discovery and evangelization to the Mississippi and down its winding course, in his birch-bark canoe, and won the plaudits of the world after having gained the martyr of duty's crown. The first Mission among the Illinois was that of Kaskaskia under the Rock, afterward crowned with ramparts of Fort St. Louis near the present city of Utica. Then came the magnanimous servants of God, an Allouez, a Rale, a Gravier, a Binneteau, a Marest, a Pinet, a Senat, a Mermet, and the other glorious knightly followers of that great leader of men St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Now, after the lapse of ninety-one eventful years the grand story comes to a sudden close with a poignant note of failure; the Banishment of the Jesuits from Louisiana in 1764. Father Francis Philibert Watrin, who had lived among the Illinois for almost thirty years gives a touching account of the tragedy. In his recital of the affair, Father Watrin assures his correspondent in Rome, he will be careful to say nothing which

---

<sup>1</sup> This great work began in Canada, on June 19, 1625, when Fathers Charles Lalemant, Edmond Masse and Jean Brebeuf, members of the Jesuit Order, arrived at Quebec, to take up the work initiated by the Franciscan Fathers, called the Recollets, in 1615, to bear the message of the gospel to the roving hordes that filled the forests from Quebec to Lake Huron. Father Lalemant remained there for a time and in 1626 wrote the first letter of the famous "Relations of the Jesuits." Jean de Brebeuf was selected for the Huron mission, and there won the crown of martyrdom. The Huron Mission became in due time one of the glories of the American Church, strong in faith and rich in heroic virtue. But the relentless fury of the Iroquois, urged on by English and Dutch neighbors, drove the Christian Hurons and their friends from their ancient seats, ever westward along the northern lakes. The Jesuits followed their demoralized flock as far as the Straits of Mackinac and the western edge of Lake Superior. On September 17, 1641, Fathers Raymbault and Jogues visited Sault Ste. Marie. They were the first Europeans that ever passed through the Sault and stood on the shores of Lake Superior. From Pointe de St. Esprit, the most westerly outpost of religion or civilization, Father Marquette and his companions looked wistfully towards the home of the Sioux in the valley of the Mississippi, five years before the New England Eliot had addressed the tribe of Indians that dwelt within six miles of Boston Harbor.

will depart in the least from these two rules, "love for religion and the truth."<sup>2</sup>

The unrelenting propaganda against the Society of Jesus, especially in lands of the Latin tongue, acquired for Pombal, Choiseul, d'Aranda, Tannucci and their accomplices the name of Immortals through the destruction of the American Missions. Among those who took up the cry against the Jesuits in the Missions along the Mississippi River was a certain M. de la Freniere, of the Superior Council of New Orleans. Before this assembly, utterly incompetent as to jurisdiction and ability, the Jesuits as a body were accused and condemned unheard. "It was said that the Institute of the Jesuits was hostile to royal authority, the rights of bishops, and the public peace and safety; and that the vows uttered according to this Institute were null and void." They were condemned to drop the name and the garb of Jesuits. Excepting their books and some wearing apparel, all their property, real and personal, was to be seized and sold at auction. But let Father Watrin tell us the shocking details of this act of usurpation and the sufferings it entailed. "It was ordained that the chapel ornaments and the sacred vessels of New Orleans should be delivered up to the Reverend Capuchin Fathers; that the chapel ornaments and sacred vessels of the Jesuits living in the country of the Illinois should be delivered up to the Royal procurator for that country, and that the chapels should then be demolished; and that, finally, the afore-said Jesuits, so-called, should return to France, embarking upon the first ships ready to depart,—prohibiting them, meanwhile, from remaining together. A sum of six hundred livres was assigned to pay each one's passage, and another, of 1,500 francs, for their sustenance and support for six months. They were enjoined to present themselves, after that term, to Monsieur the Duke de Choiseul, Secretary of State in the Department of Marine, to ask him for the pensions which would be assigned from the proceeds of the sale of their property."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Father Watrin's "Memoir on the Banishment of the Jesuits of Louisiana," dated September 3, 1764, was published by Carayon, Paris 1865, and given in English by Thwaites in the "Jesuit Relations," vol. LXX, and by Alvord and Carter in "Illinois Historical Collections," vol. X. The Critical period 1763-1765. An abridgement of the same Memoir was translated into English by the Rev. D. Lynch, S. J., and published in the "Magazine of Western History," vol. I, pp. 263-269. The original Latin Ms. of the Abridgement was discovered in the Archives of the Propaganda, in Rome, by Father Van der Sanden, Chancellor of St. Louis Archdiocese. It bore the name of Father Philibert Watrin as its author. All our quotations are taken from this Memoir as published in French and English in Thwaites, "The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents," vol. LXX, pp. 212-301. The author takes this occasion to extend his sincere thanks to the Firm of Burrows Brothers Company for courteous permission to make liberal extracts from their monumental edition of the "Jesuit Relations" in this and the foregoing chapters.

<sup>3</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. VXX, p. 219.

But why must these things be done? What crimes have the Jesuits committed, that such a severe penalty should be inflicted upon them? Father Watrin received an answer, that surprised everyone concerned: "It is stated that the Jesuits established in the colony had not taken any care of their missions; that they had thought only of making their estates valuable; and that they were usurpers of the vicariate-general of New Orleans."<sup>4</sup> Father Watrin felt it to be his duty to answer the threefold charge, not that he expected to make any impression on his self-constituted judges, but that he desired to give honorable men who might inquire, an opportunity of judging for themselves. "There is today hardly any province in France" he said, "where there is not some prominent person who has lived in Louisiana; of these persons, there is not some one who has not known Jesuits there, and most of them have even been able to scrutinize these Jesuits very closely.

Now, the Jesuits await with confidence the testimony that can be rendered concerning them, upon the points in question here; still more, they dare to cite, as witnesses of their conduct, three Governors of Louisiana, and a Vicar-General of the episcopate of Quebec for this same colony. All were still living in this month of June of this year, 1764."<sup>5</sup>

"The first witness will be, then, Monsieur de Bienville, now captain of the Royal ships, who twenty-two years ago retired to Paris. He must be regarded as the founder of the colony of Louisiana; it was he who in 1698 accompanied his brother, Monsier d'Iberville, when that illustrious naval officer discovered the mouth of the Mississippi, which Sieur de la Salle, that famous adventurer, had missed. Monsieur de Bienville was then left upon the shores of this river, to begin a settlement there; it was he who governed this colony for forty-four years, with the exception of a few intervals; it was he who put it nearly in the condition in which it is today, by building New Orleans and the fort of Mobile, and by forming the other posts that are seen in Louisiana. During so long a government, he was always very attentive to all that was taking place in the various parts of this vast province; he knew the worth of all those who were employed there. Now, no one in this country can have forgotten the very special kindness with which he honored the Jesuits of this colony; would he have acted thus toward missionaries who, failing in the care of their mission, had failed in the most essential of their duties?"<sup>6</sup>

"The second witness will be Monsieur the Marquis de Vaudreuil, late Governor of New France; he succeeded Monsieur de Bienville in

<sup>4</sup> "Jesuit Relations," l. cit., p. 221.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 223.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p. 223.

the government of Louisiana. The Jesuits found in him also a protector, and even an openly declared friend; it would be difficult to add anything to the tokens of kindness which he constantly conferred upon them. But what was it that could win for them such kindness? It was, without doubt, the impression which they made upon him by their fidelity to their principal duties."<sup>7</sup>

"A third witness for the Jesuits of Louisiana is Monsieur de Kerlerec, captain of a ship, and last Governor of this colony; a single proof suffices to show what he thought of them. It is a letter which he wrote to them, a little before their ruin; he recalled to them these words of Our Lord to his disciples: *Beati eritis cum vos oderint homines, et persecuti vos fuerint, et dixerint, omne malum adversum vos mentientes, propter me: quoadete et exultate!* Is it credible that Monsier de Kerlerec would have chosen to apply this text to missionaries who did not give any care to their missions?"<sup>8</sup>

"Finally a fourth witness will be Monsieur the Abbé de L'Isle Dieu; for more than thirty years he had been in Paris, Vicar-general of the episcopate of Quebec, and especially charged with the affairs of that diocese which concern Louisiana. Now, it is also this Abbé who has shown what he thought of the Jesuits of Louisiana when he wrote to them after the decree of the 6th of August, 1762—that they were passing away with the regrets of the episcopal body and all good people. In writing thus it is probable that he did not regard them as people who had failed to care for their missions."<sup>9</sup>

Thus spoke the Superior of the men that stood condemned by a band of tyrants who, vested with a little brief authority, used it as only tyrants will, to destroy them who would not sanction their evil cause.<sup>10</sup> Father Watrin would no longer address them who refused to hear. But turning to the audience he saw before him, in spirit, he continued: I hear some one say: "Cannot the Jesuits of Louisiana defend themselves, then, except through the testimony of others? Ought they not to let the work that they have done in their missions, the operations and the fruits of their zeal, speak for them?"<sup>11</sup> Indeed they can, answered the Father in mournful tone: "In the country named Illinois, the Jesuits had four permanent missions. The first was that one where the savages, called Kaskaskias were instructed; and these are the exercises which were carried on there. At sunrise, the bell rang for prayer and mass; the savages said prayers in their own language, and during the mass they chanted to the air of the Roman chant, hymns

7. "Jesuit Relations," l. cit., p. 224.

8. Ibidem, p. 224.

9. Ibidem, p. 227.

10. Ibidem, p. 227.

11. Ibidem, p. 230.

and canticles, also translated into their language, with the suitable prayers; at the end of the mass, the missionary catechized the children. Having returned to his house, he was occupied in instructing the adult neophytes and catechumens, to prepare them for baptism or for penitence, for communion or for marriage; as soon as he was free, he went through the village to arouse the believers to fervor, and to exhort unbelievers to embrace Christianity. The rest of the day was needed for reciting the divine office, studying the language of the savages, and preparing the instructions for Sunday and feastdays; for so many exercises, so varied and so continual, there was surely needed care, and a great deal of care. The savages, at least, certainly believe that the Jesuits took care of them; as for the first news of the decree declared against their missionaries, they wished to go to find the officer who commanded in that country, to beg him at least to leave them Father Meurin, who was charged with their mission. And what other idea could they have of the Jesuits? A single one of the latter could represent them all, as men entirely devoted to the instructions of the savages. Such was Father de Guyenne, who died in 1752 (sc. 1762.) Having spent thirty-six years in the missions of Louisiana, he had traversed those of the Alibamons, the Arkansas, and the Miamis. He had been Curé of Fort Chartres, and had everywhere been respected as a man of rare virtue, of singular discretion and of an inviolable attachment to the duties of a missionary. Since the year 1743 he had devoted himself to the Illinois mission. Called to more honorable and easier positions, he had remained with his savages; and by his constancy he had preserved religion, which had become much unsettled in that nation; he had even greatly revived their fervor by his untiring application to all the exercises. Finally, four years before his death, afflicted by a partial paralysis which rendered him incapable of movement, and feeling a great weakness in his chest,—an old trouble which left him hardly enough strength to make himself heard,—he did not cease receiving at all times his dear neophytes, who came from a long league's distance to be instructed. He catechized them, exorted them and heard their confessions; he prepared them for the communion; and, in the capacity of superior of the house, he used his power to relieve their poverty. Does not a man so faithful to his ministry up to the last day of his life make it presumable that, among the Jesuits established amid the Illinois, there remained some zeal and care in regard to their missions?"<sup>12</sup>

"At one and one-fourth leagues from the village of the Illinois savages, there was a French village also named Kaskaskia; for forty-four years there had been in this village a parish, which has always been governed by the Jesuits. Now, we dare to repeat here, regarding those who were charged with this employ, what has been said above of their

<sup>12</sup> "Jesuit Relations," l. cit., p. 231.

associates in general—that there is hardly any province in France where there are not still witnesses of the exactness of these Curés in discharging their functions, that is, in visiting the sick and in relieving the poor. These too are witnesses of their assiduity at the tribunal of penance, and at the almost daily instructions of the children—to which must be still added the instructions of the negroes and the savages, slaves of the French, to prepare them for baptism and for the reception of the other sacraments.’<sup>13</sup>

“But here is something which is more than care; since the year 1753, there has been in the French village of Kaskaskias a newly-built parochial church; this church is 104 feet long and 44 feet wide. Now, it never could have been finished, if the expense of the building had not been drawn from the building fund and from the contributions of the parishioners. These Jesuits successively Curés of this parish—Father Tartarin, Father Watrin, and Father Aubert—have employed for this purpose the greater part of what they obtained from their surplice and their mass fees. When the curés have the construction and ornamentation of their church so much at heart, it is also probable that they do not fail in their other duties.’<sup>14</sup>

“Would you have yet another proof of the care that the Jesuits have taken of this parish. Fifteen years ago, at a league from the old village, on the other bank of the Mississippi; there was established a new village under the name of Ste. Genevieve. Then the Curé of Kaskaskia found himself obliged to go there to administer the sacraments, at least to the sick; and, when the new inhabitants saw their houses multiplying, they asked to have a church built there. This being granted them, the journeys of the missionary became still more frequent, because he thought that he ought then to yield himself still more to the willingness of his new parishioners, and to their needs. However, in order to go to this new church he must cross the Mississippi, which, in this place, is three-eighths of a league wide; he sometimes had to trust himself to a slave, who alone guided the canoe; it was necessary, in fine, to expose himself to the danger of perishing, if in the middle of the river they had been overtaken by a violent storm. None of all these inconveniences ever prevented the Curé of Kaskaskia from going to Ste. Genevieve when charity called him thither, and he was always charged with this care until means were found to place at Saint Genevieve a special Curé—which occurred only a few years ago, when the inhabitants of the place built a house for the pastor. These two villages, that of Kaskaskia and that of Saint Genevieve, made the second and the third establishment of the Jesuits in the Illinois country. There is no need to call attention to the fact

---

<sup>13</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” l. cit., p. 233.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, p. 234.

that, to accomplish only a part of the work that has just been indicated, care, courage, and constancy were necessary."<sup>15</sup>

At eighty leagues from the Illinois was the post called Vincennes or Saint Ange, from the names of the officers who commanded there. This post is upon the river Ouabache, (Wabash) which, about seventy leagues lower down, together with the Ohio, which it has joined, discharges its waters into the Mississippi; there were, at the last, in this village at least sixty houses of French people, without counting the Miami savages, who were quite near. There to was sufficient cause for care and occupation—which the Jesuits did not refuse—a conclusion which must be reached if one considers that this post was every day increasing in population; that the greater part of its new inhabitants, having long been voyageurs, were little accustomed to the duties of Christians; and that, to establish among them some manner of living, many instructions and exhortations, private and public were necessary."<sup>16</sup>

With this passage Father Watrin carries us outside the territory of the future diocese of St. Louis. Still even Vincennes is intimately related to its elder sister through its first prelate, the saintly Bishop Simon Brute, who received his consecration in the Cathedral of St. Louis, at the hands of his noble friend Joseph Rosati. But what did the missionary do for the savages? Yes, what did he not do for them, amid scenes often revolting in their squalor, heartrending in the deeds he must witness without being able to prevent or ameliorate them. But Father Watrin does not touch upon the heroic side of missionary life. All that he says in justification of the missionary's conduct is this:

"He lived with them, always ready to teach them the Christian doctrine as soon as it pleased God to open their hearts; meanwhile, he kept them in alliance and friendship with the French, and he succeeded in this all the better, because these people saw clearly, by his conduct, that he was not in their midst to make a fortune. This disinterestedness established his credit, and through that he became useful—we dare to say, even necessary—to the colony."<sup>17</sup>

Just so, just so, comes the answer from the eager throng. But, why have you not provided the Poste of Arkansas with a priest? That place is within your jurisdiction: There is a garrison there, and there are Indians there who have always been friendly to the Jesuits.

"This, perhaps, was the occasion for it" answers the patient Father: "In 1763, there were no more missionaries among the Arkansas, where the Jesuits had been obliged by the terms of their foundation, to furnish one."

<sup>15</sup> "Jesuit Relations," l. cit., p. 235.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 237.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 241.

“Several years before, Father Carette had left his post; his brethren had decided that he ought to have left it sooner. In spite of the little hope that there was of leading the savages of the place to Christianity, the Father studied their language a long time, and labored to correct the morals of the French, but reaped hardly any fruit from his toil. He nevertheless followed both the French and the savages in their various changes of location, occasioned by the overflowing of the Mississippi, near which the Poste is situated. Notwithstanding so many annoyances, the missionary was not discouraged at seeing his efforts rendered useless by the conduct of those who ought to have sustained them; he continued in patience, until the event which we are about to describe. In the fort of the Arkansas there was no longer a chapel, no longer any room wherein one could say mass, except the room where the commandant took his meals. This was not a very suitable place, not only because it was a dining room, but on account of the bad conduct and freedom of language of those who frequented it; everything that was in the fort entered there, even to the fowls. A chicken, flying over the altar, overturned the chalice, which had been left there at the end of the mass. The spectators were not affected by this; one of those who ought to have been most concerned about it, exclaimed: ‘Ah! behold the shop of the good God thrown down!’ To these sentiments, so little religious, corresponded a life as little Christian. Father Carette at last concluded that he must withdraw, at least until he should see a chapel built in the fort, and until they were disposed to respect religion there; besides, he was necessary elsewhere, for work from which better success was expected.”<sup>18</sup>

We have now recounted the substance of the able defense made by Father Watrin against the traducers of his Brother Jesuits of the Illinois country. Not, indeed, before the Superior Council at New Orleans, was it spoken, not in any public assembly was it heard. But, within his own conscience, serene as the deep blue of heaven, in the very presence of God. In his letter he gave but the transcript of what he thought and felt in the dark days of September 1763. What happened next is recounted in the same letter: Meanwhile, the courier despatched to the Illinois to bear the decree, arrived on the night of September 23rd, at Fort Chartres, distant six leagues from the residence of the Jesuits. He delivered to the procurator of the king the commission which charged him to execute the decree; and on the next day, about eight or nine o’clock in the morning, that officer of justice repaired to the house of the Jesuits, accompanied by the registrar and the bailiff of that jurisdiction. Some days afterward, he tried to turn to account the moderation that he had used in not arriving during the night, “as his orders directed,” said he; with that exception, they ought to have been satisfied with his exactness. He read to Father Watrin, the Superior,

---

<sup>18</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” 1. cit., p. 269.

the decree of condemnation, and, having given him a copy of it, he made him at once leave his room to put the seal upon it; the same thing was done with the other missionaries who happened to be in the house. There remained one hall where they could remain together, although with great inconvenience; but this favor was refused them, because the guards placed in custody of the property seized, opposed this; they were unwilling that the Jesuits should be able to watch their conduct so closely. The procurator of the King feared to displease these guardians, and would not permit the Jesuits to remain at the house of one of their confreres—who being Curé of the place, had his private lodging near the parish church; they did not put the seal thereon, because there was nothing there to seize. The missionaries, driven from their own house, found quarters as best they could. The Superior, sixty-seven years old, departed on foot to find a lodging, a long league away, with a confrere of his, a missionary to the savages; and the French who met him on this journey groaned to see persecution begin with him. As soon as the savages learned that he had arrived among them, they came to show to him and to Father Meurin, his associate, the share which they took in the distress of their Fathers: the news of their condemnation had already caused many tears to be shed in the village. They were asked why they were thus treated, especially in a country where so many disorders had been so long allowed. The old missionary, after several repeated interrogations, finally replied; *Arechi Kiecuegane telichi ki canta manghi*—It is because we sternly condemn their follies. They comprehended the meaning of this answer—indeed, they knew that the Jesuits, in whatever place they may be established, consider themselves bound by their profession to combat vice; and that, in fighting it, they make enemies for themselves.”<sup>19</sup>

They wished, then, to ask that at least the chapel and the house of the missionary be preserved, in order that the best instructed person among them might assemble the children and repeat the prayers to them; and that every Sunday and Feastday he might summon those who prayed—that is to say, the Christians—by the ringing of the bell, to fulfill as well as possible the duties of religion. They did, in fact, make such a request, and obtained what they asked. There was no delay in presenting, in the name of nearly all the habitants, a petition addressed to the commandant and the commissary of the country, in order to secure the retention of at least Father Aubert, the Curé of French Kaskaskia; and as the answer seemed to be deferred too long a time, a little while afterward a second petition was sent. While waiting for an answer to this, the more intelligent of the habitants asked by what right the government had taken possession of the property of the Jesuits; and what power it had over their persons in a country ceded by the treaty of peace to the

---

<sup>19</sup> “Jesuit Relations,” l. cit., p. 275.

crown of England. Above all, they were indignant at the seizure made of the sacred vessels of a chapel belonging to the Hurons of Detroit, which Father Salleneuve, missionary to that nation, had brought to the Illinois country, when he had taken refuge there, two and a half years before. There was another cause for astonishment: this Father, who had come from Detroit, and Father de la Morinie, from the post of Saint Joseph, did not belong to Louisiana, but to Canada; it was extreme want that had obliged them to withdraw to the country of the Illinois, and they had remained there only for lack of the necessary opportunities to return to their posts. Father Salleneuve had no work in the Illinois mission, and Father de la Morinie had only taken charge of the church of Sainte Genevieve through the motive of a zeal that refuses itself to nothing; it was plain that the Council of New Orleans ought to have neither known nor thought of them. But those who had the authority in Illinois did not think thus, and the Jesuits submitted to every interpretation that the officials chose to give to the decree.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, the auction was finished; the house, the furniture, the cattle, the lands, had been sold; the slaves were to be taken to New Orleans, to be sold there for the benefit of the king; and the chapel was to be razed by the man to whom the house had been adjudged. The Jesuits were then permitted to re-enter their former home, the use of which was, by a clause inserted in the bill of sale, reserved to them until their embarkation.

They found their chapel in a still more melancholy condition; after the sacred vessels and the pictures had been taken away, the shelves of the altar had been thrown down, the linings of the ornaments had been given to negroes decried for their evil lives; and a large crucifix, which had stood above the altar, and the chandeliers, were found placed above a cupboard in a house whose reputation was not good. To see the marks of spoliation in the chapel, one might have thought that it was the enemies of the Catholic religion who had caused it.<sup>21</sup>

The Jesuits were forced to leave not only their missions, but the country of their adoption also. Their mighty organization as one of the great Orders of the Church was suppressed and they themselves were homeless wanderers. Yet, in due time the Society of Jesus was to rise again from the ruins; and Jesuit Fathers of a younger generation, but of equal "faith and daring and religious zeal," were destined to come and continue the work their brothers had so grandly inaugurated one hundred and fifty years before.

---

<sup>20</sup> "Jesuit Relations," l. cit., p. 276.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 279.



PART ONE

---

THE ERA OF PREPARATION

BOOK II

*The Church in the Valley  
during the Transition Period*



# St. Louis des Illinois

## VILLAGE IN 1780

ST. LOUIS OF THE ILLINOIS.  
by Monsieur D. François de Coubat, Lieutenant Colonel, and Lieutenant Governor  
of the Western part of the Illinois in 1780.

FORTIFIÉ PAR MONSIEUR D. FRANÇOIS DE COUBAT  
LIEUTENANT COLONEL ET LIEUTENANT GOUVERNEUR.  
DE LA PARTIE OCCIDENTALE DES ILLINOIS. EN 1780.



- A. LA TOUR
- B. DEMIS LINES.
- C. BASTIONS.
- D. PORTES.
- E. GOUVERNEMENT.
- F. EGLISE.
- G. PLACE
- H. PETITE RIVIERE.
- I. EMPLACEMENTS DES PARTICULIERS.
- O. CLOISTRE.
- E. GOUVERNEMENT BASTION.
- F. - Curie la Wall.
- G. - Square, (public)
- C. - Barracks.
- M. - Small River.
- A. - The Tower.
- F. - Church.

Je certifie que le présent est conforme au plan qui lui  
fait en 1784 sans être autorisé par le Gouvernement, mais  
seulement comme Lieutenant de la Ville d'ILLINOIS.  
Aug. Choctaw.

I certify that the present conforms to a plan that I have  
made in 1784, without being authorized by the Government,  
but only as the Lieutenant of the said Village.  
Aug. Choctaw.



## BOOK II

### CHAPTER 1

#### THE FOUNDING OF ST. LOUIS

It is a memorable coincidence that, at the very time the Jesuit Fathers at Kaskaskia were, with saddened hearts, making their preparations for the voyage down the river to New Orleans and to exile, another party arrived from New Orleans seeking with anxious but hopeful hearts a place where they might establish their trading station and their home. Neither one knew of the other. And yet the leader of the traders and trappers was destined in his own way to further the great work which the others had to relinquish. The foundation of St. Louis by Laclède-Liguest was, under the Providence of God, the means of sending out the rays of divine truth, as from a central orb, into all the dark expanses of the Mississippi Valley.

They are but traders, voyageurs and coureurs de bois, men of a hardy race, not over-religious, though Catholic at heart, every one of them. There is no priest among them. Laclède-Liguest is of noble lineage: the members of the firm he represents are merchant-princes, enjoying the confidence of the government. Their letters-patent or charter as we would say, grant to them the exclusive right of trading with the Indians on the Missouri River. They have brought along a large assortment of goods to give in exchange for the skins and peltries of the northern wilds. In Ste. Genevieve, the only European settlement of importance on the left bank of the river, M. Laclède-Liguest could find no magazine large enough for storing his merchandise. Besides, it is too far removed from the Missouri River. He therefore, determines to found a new town as near as possible to the watery highway that should carry his boats and pirogues to the waters of the Northwest. For the time being, he finds a cheerful shelter at Fort Chartres with its commandant Noyon de Villiers and St. Ange de Bellerive, who are waiting rather eagerly for the arrival of the English garrison.

After his business affairs have been arranged by the dispatch of his bateaux and pirogues to the Indian nations along the Missouri and the Mississippi, Laclède finds time and inclination to think about his higher projects. In company with the young Auguste Chouteau he sets out on a journey to find the best location for his proposed village and

discovers it, to his great delight, on a rocky eminence of the river front, covered with a fine grove of walnut trees, a few miles below the junction of the two great rivers. "You will come here as soon as navigation opens," said Laclède to Chouteau, "and will cause this place to be cleared, in order to form our settlement after the plan that I shall give you."<sup>1</sup>

On his return to Fort Chartres Laclède is reported to have said to M. de Noyon and his officers, that he had found a location for his settlement which might become, hereafter, "one of the finest cities of America."<sup>2</sup> The rest of the winter was spent in maturing the plan for his city and procuring the things necessary for the commencement of his new settlement. Having hired a number of workmen from the villages and towns along the river, he sent them in boats to the site he had chosen and marked. Auguste Chouteau was in command of the expedition. This was on the 15th day of February 1764. The first house built was intended for the storage of Laclède's merchandise, which he was bound to remove from Fort Chartres before the arrival of the English. Smaller cabins were built for the members of the expedition. In the early part of April Laclède arrived among Chouteau's company of builders. He laid down the lines for the streets of the new village, fixed the place of his own house, assigned one block for religious purposes and designated another as the Place des Armes and then, to crown his work, named the new foundation, St. Louis, in honor of St. Louis IX, the patron saint of the King of France. A party of French Cahokians came as mere onlookers but decided to stay. Yet, when a large band of Missouri Indians suddenly appeared with friendly intentions, but overfriendly importunities, the Cahokians departed for home, and Laclède himself had to be brought up from Fort Chartres to restore order and peace. Thus proceeded the work of raising the village of St. Louis on the natural foundation of the wind-swept eminence hard by the river and drawing by its beauty and youthful vigor many of the habitants from Cahokia, St. Philip, Fort Chartres and Kaskaskia to build their hearths and homes there, and to live and die, as they thought, under the Lilies of France. Auguste Chouteau in his *Journal of the "Founding of St. Louis,"* relates some of the particulars of this migration. After stating how Monsieur Laclède had done all in his power to prevent the French families of the Illinois country, who naturally dreaded the regime of England, and its heretical king, from going with the

---

<sup>1</sup> "Journal of the Founding of St. Louis," by Auguste Chouteau, in "Missouri Historical Society Collections," vol. IV, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> Chouteau's Journal, p. 352. Bishop Briand of Quebec, in 1769, had predicted that Cahokia would eventually be the center of religion in the Illinois Country. He was mistaken, but his guess as to the location of the center was not very far from being right.

French commander de Noyon down to New Orleans, young Chouteau continues, saying that he, on the contrary, advised them to go up the river to his own new settlement on the French side, promising at the same time, that he would cheerfully furnish them with the necessary means of transporting them and their families and their property to their future abode. "Several families accepted these offers" he writes, "and obtained immediately the wagons and harness to proceed to St. Louis, M. Laeclède-Liguest, aided them in settling, and ordered me to assign them lands, according to the plan he had made, which I did as exactly as possible."<sup>3</sup> The people from Cahokia also returned, forming with the thirty families from Fort Chartres and St. Philip, Laeclède's original followers, the "compact body required to give permanence to St. Louis. Fort Chartres had nothing left of its population save the garrison, soon to be withdrawn. The village of Nouvelle Chartres with the chapel of St. Anne, lay in ruins, the departing villagers having taken along the boards, the windows and the door-frames and everything else they could transport to the places where they intended to settle."<sup>4</sup> As for the Indians of the Kaskaskia Missions, Chouteau tells us, that the great chief of the Ottawas, Pontiac, forced them to join him in his proposed attack upon the English, saying to them: "If you hesitate one moment, I will destroy you, like the fire which passes through a prairie: Open wide your ears, and remember it is Pontiac who speaks."<sup>5</sup>

It has been remarked by some writers as rather strange that no priest lent his presence to the grand occasion of the foundation of St. Louis. On all similar occasions heretofore the Church was represented by members of priesthood; *The Vexilla Regis* or the *Te Deum Laudamus* ascended to God in praise and thanksgiving and humble petition, whilst the smoke of incense floated on the air and the salute of the guns announced that the place belonged to God and the King. Why the exception in the case of St. Louis? Laeclède and his followers were Catholics and loved the splendor of the Catholic service. But here there is no hymn, no ceremony, no mass, no priest. The explanation is not far to seek. Whilst young Chouteau and his chief and friend Laeclède are busy with the preliminaries of the founding of their village, the only priest remaining in the vast territory of Upper Louisiana, the Recollet Luke Collet, bowed down by the weight of years and infirmities, is in hiding for fear of the British soldiery: and Father Meurin, the expelled Jesuit of Kaskaskia Mission, is in New Orleans, in enforced exile, begging his unjust jailors of the Superior Council to permit him to return to his poor Indians and French on the banks of the Mississippi. Father Meurin, after a toilsome voyage, arrived at Kaskaskia

University of Southern California

<sup>3</sup> Chouteau's Journal, passim.

<sup>4</sup> Chouteau's Journal, p. 361.

<sup>5</sup> Chouteau's Journal, p. 361.

in mid-summer, 1764, having left New Orleans in the middle of February. "We have every reason to suppose," says one who made an exhaustive study of the good Father's life, "that if Father Meurin had been allowed to leave New Orleans when he desired, he would have witnessed the historic act."<sup>6</sup> But although he was not present at the city's birth, he nevertheless can claim the distinction of being the pioneer priest of St. Louis, by virtue of his visits in 1766, and his frequent ministrations there in the three following years. As the people had not as yet succeeded in building a church, Father Meurin must have said mass in the home of some one of the better situated families. This is the usual way of founding missions or parishes. First come the visits of the priest and the services of the church in any decent though primitive locality, as a private residence, an assembly room, a tent or even the open air; the building of a church comes later. So it happened that the first Baptism, Father Meurin, priest of "Our Lady of the Cahokias," administered in St. Louis took place in a tent, as the first entry in the record shows. The child baptized was named Mary Deschamps, and the Baptism is said to have been "in the country of the Illinois, in St. Louis, in a tent for want of a church." The second St. Louis child baptized by Father Meurin was Antoine, son of Lizette, a Pawnee slave. This Baptism was on the 9th of May 1766. Auguste Chouteau's mother, Marie Therese Chouteau, had come up the river from New Orleans with her five children, two sons and three daughters, landing at Fort Chartres on November 3, 1763, after a voyage of three months. The husband, August Rene Chouteau, remained in New Orleans. Mrs. Chouteau spent the winter 1763-64 in Fort Chartres, but in March proceeded to Cahokia, where she awaited the completion of her house in St. Louis. In September she came over to the new village, the first white woman in St. Louis. She is affectionately regarded as "The Mother of St. Louis." The scandalous legend as to her relations with Laclède-Liguest broadcast by Billon and Paul Beckwith was exploded by Alexander N. De Menil in his *Madame Chouteau Vindicated*. The assertion that the Catholic clergy of New Orleans and of St. Louis connived at the supposed adulterous relations of Laclède and Mrs. Chouteau, and that she was permitted to approach the sacraments, as she certainly was, in spite of a notorious concubinage, is too silly to merit attention. Yet, the libel was believed by many for upwards of ninety years. The fact is now established that the mother of St. Louis, was "a true, honest and respectable wife and mother," in spite of the other fact that she left her cruel husband on two occasions, in 1750, after the birth of August, and in 1763, after the birth of her last child, Marie Therèse. A reconciliation of the two spirited persons had been

---

<sup>6</sup> "Sebastian Louis Meurin," by Charles H. Metzger, S. J., in "Illinois Catholic Historical Review, vol. III, p. 372.

effected in 1757, which lasted until 1763. Her husband died in the summer, 1776, and Madame Chouteau and her five children did not inherit from him.<sup>7</sup>

The first Catholic Church, a small log-house, was erected in 1770, on the Church-lot assigned by Laclède, and was blessed on the 24th of June of the same year, not by Father Gibault, as is generally said, but by Father Meurin himself. In the absence of the priest in charge, the burials were generally performed by some layman that held a subordinate position in the church, as the chantry or the sacristan. In the early days it was one René Kiercereau, that attended to this office from October 1770 to March 1772, and recorded the burial of nineteen whites, ten negroes, and five Indians. The next priest to inscribe his name and title on the Church Records of St. Louis was the celebrated Father Pierre Gibault, "Parish Priest of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady of Kaskaskia and Vicar General of My Lord, the Bishop of Quebec." Father Gibault served the Church of St. Louis from June 1770 to January 1772.

The population of St. Louis was even then a strange mixture of many types; there were retired hunters and trappers and boatmen from Canada, farmers from Lower Louisiana, Spanish soldiers and traders, Indian and Negro slaves, native Creoles from the towns beyond the river, adventurers from France and Spain, some of them men of gentle birth and culture. But, as diversified as these elements were, there ran through all the tangled skein the golden thread of a common religion, uniting them into one family, the family of God. Religion was to them, not a mere thing of the intellect, much less a soothing appeal to the sense, nor a system of philosophy, though it was all this and more; Religion was to them the first and foremost duty and privilege, the life of the spirit permeating, vivifying and uniting into one body the men and women that had received Christ by Faith.<sup>8</sup>

All that had so far been accomplished in the Mississippi Valley in regard to civilization was due to the spirit of Catholicism, the proudest possession of the French pioneers. Now, in spite of the English regime to the east and the Spanish regime to the west of the river, the French influence remained dominant. St. Louis was in many ways a replica of Kaskaskia and Cahokia. Crime was hardly known. Justice was administered in a fatherly way either by the priest or by some one chosen from "the ancients," as Father Roux styles the elder citizens. The announcements of sales and other publications were made on Sundays from the church steps. There were some minor offices

---

<sup>7</sup> Billon, F. L., "Annals of St. Louis, 1764-1804," p. 412. "Madam Chouteau Vindicated," Alexander N. DeMenil, in "Globe-Democrat," October 16, 1921.

<sup>8</sup> They were the children of the France before the Revolution, still worthy of the ancient name, "The First Daughter of the Church."

in the church, held by laymen, the chanter or singer who, in the absence of the priest, was empowered to perform the burial service; the sacristan or verger, and the Suisse whose office it was to keep order during the divine service. The church, with all that it implied, was the center of the people's life in French and Spanish days. "Learning none had, unless it was the parish priest, and he, their oracle in matters of faith, could be taken likewise as their voucher in matters of science," as Scharf<sup>9</sup> remarks. Their honor and good name was their great treasure. Their hospitality was proverbial; every latch-string hung out and every man's house was the stranger's. Punctuality and honesty in all dealings, politeness and courtesy to strangers, friendship and cordiality among neighbors, gentle kindness and affection at home, reverence for elders, respect for superiors, and justice to all, were among the social virtues prevalent among this primitive people. "Contented with little and happy with more," seems to have been their rule of life. They had no politics, save loyalty to France, and a dim belief that, the King of France was monarch of all the earth, or at least ought to be. Care and worry found no lodgement at their fireside. "God is in His heaven," they said, "All is right with the world."

"Amusements, festivals and holidays were natural among such a people. They were too devout not to keep every *Fete* in the calendar, and too fond of enjoyment not to wish there were twice as many more. Neither sex nor condition were kept from these festive enjoyments; pleasure was like the church floor, free to all without distinction of quality. The black slave danced to the same fiddle that sent his mistress and master tripping, and the stolid Indian sat by on his haunches, wrapped in his blanket, watching and wondering. It has become a proverb, the contentment and happiness of the negro slaves in French Illinois. All were Catholics and all kept the festivals of the great Mother Church in the same indential spirit."<sup>10</sup>

In our far less joyous days some may wonder at the levity displayed by these people, others may even raise eye-brows in solemn disapproval. Yet, as Stoddard writes "It must be confessed that the French people avoid all intemperate and immoral excesses, and conduct themselves with apparent decorum."<sup>11</sup>

And Scharf is fair enough to add his favorable judgment: "It seems certain that to their honest religious convictions, and the candor with which they obeyed them, the habitants of Upper Louisiana owed much of that sterling business integrity and that rigid adherence to

---

<sup>9</sup> "History of St. Louis," vol. I, p. 281.

<sup>10</sup> "History of St. Louis," by Scharf, vol. I, p. 282.

<sup>11</sup> "Sketches of Louisiana," Stoddard, p. 316.

truth in all its forms which always excited the surprise and admiration of strangers.’<sup>12</sup>

The village of St. Louis had not yet kept the second anniversary of its birth, when it received a garrison of thirty men and a Commandant, October 1765.

A valuable accession it was, as all were Frenchmen and stood under the command of Laclède’s special friend, St. Ange de Bellerive. But what business had a French commandant on the soil that was now known to belong to Spain? Was his authority in St. Louis self-constituted, or did he rule by popular action or acclamation? Nothing of the kind. St. Ange held the same power in all parts of the Illinois country that Noyon de Villiers had exercised, in the name of the King of France, until the Spanish government should have taken actual possession. So he was just as much in authority on the Missouri side as he had been on the Illinois side, until the coming of Captain Sterling to Fort Chartres. In fact, the Spanish authorities in New Orleans in 1769 treated St. Ange as the representative of the Spanish government, and when Don Alexandro O’Reilly, the Spanish Governor of the Province of Louisiana, ordered that all subjects of the colony who wished to remain under the domination of his Catholic Majesty, must take the oath of allegiance, it was “Captain St. Ange de Bellerive, Commandant of the Spanish Colony of Illinois,” that was appointed to make them take it in this form: “That they promise and swear to God and to his Catholic Majesty, to be faithful to him and to sacrifice their lives for his service, to warn him or his commandants of anything coming to their knowledge prejudicial to his state or to the support of his crown and of his person, and to live under the laws it shall please his said Catholic Majesty to impose on them.”<sup>13</sup>

The settlers of St. Louis, whether cheerfully or not, actually took the oath of fidelity to the Spanish King, on November 9, 1769.

On February 17, 1770, three months after the date of this occurrence, St. Ange resigned, and Don Pedro Piernas, the first Spanish Lieutenant-governor, assumed the government of the Illinois country (St. Louis and dependencies.)

It is said that when Captain Stirling, the first English commander at Fort Chartres, died in January 1776, on the request of the inhabitants there, St. Ange came over from the Spanish possessions to take charge of the post of Fort Chartres until the arrival of Captain Stirling’s

---

<sup>12</sup> “History of St. Louis,” by Scharf, p. 283.

<sup>13</sup> According to Scharf, as well as to Shepard, the government of St. Louis under St. Ange was self-constituted. This is not the case. St. Ange was appointed “Captain, Commanding the Spanish Colony of Illinois,” by Count O’Reilly, Governor of the Province of Louisiana, cf. “St. Louis Catholic Historical Review,” vol. IV, p. 243 s.

successor, Captain Frazer, from Pittsburgh. This romantic incident is a fiction, as St. Ange was then no longer among the living, having died December 27, 1774, at the home of Madame Chouteau. St. Ange was never married. In his will which was made December 27, 1774, he bequeaths 25 livres for Masses and 500 livres for the construction of the church of St. Louis.

The funeral services for St. Ange de Bellerive were performed by Father Valentine, a Capuchin Monk, from New Orleans, who held his faculties from the Bishop of Santiago de Cuba, to whom the jurisdiction had now passed from the Bishop of Quebec. The Record of Burials shows the following entry: "In the year 1774, 27th of December, I the undersigned, have interred in the cemetery of this parish the body of Don Louis de St. Ange, Captain attached to the battalion of Louisiana, having administered the sacraments of the church. Fr. Valentine."

Father Valentine in official acts styles himself "Priest of the Parish of St. Louis and its dependencies," a title that does not fully square with facts.

St. Louis at that time was no parish in the Canonical sense, but only a mission. No doubt, the zealous Capuchin, was regularly appointed to St. Louis, but most likely as the chaplain for the garrison that came with Lieutenant Governor Piernas, just as the unnamed chaplain that accompanied the expedition of Don Francisco Rui<sup>14</sup> to build the Forts at the mouth of the Missouri River in March 1767, three years previous to the advent of Piernas. When Rui set out from New Orleans to the Missouri River, he was instructed to take along with him a chaplain, (name not given) who was to say mass on shore every Sunday and Feast-day, before day-break, at which all the company were to assist. He was moreover enjoined to recite the Rosary with the crew every night, as is usual on the warships of Spain."<sup>15</sup> We suspect that the unnamed chaplain of Rui's expedition was no one else than Father Valentine, and that, after the relief of Rui by Piernas, and the subsequent appointment of Piernas to the poste of St. Louis, he came with Piernas to serve as the priest of the mission of St. Louis and its dependencies. As the Lieutenant Governor could not erect Parishes or appoint parish Priests, the Capuchin, Father Valentine cannot be called the first Pastor of St. Louis, but only its first resident priest. He remained from May 1772 to June 1775, and during that period baptized sixty-five whites, twenty-four negroes and eighteen Indians. He also solemnized four marriages of whites and officiated at the interment of forty-two whites, eleven negroes and nine-

---

<sup>14</sup> Thirteen documents in regard to Don Francisco Rui's voyage to the mouth of the Missouri and the erection of the forts at this place are given by Houck, in "Spanish Regime in Missouri," vol. I, pp. 1-52. St. Ange's name is always mentioned with respect.

<sup>15</sup> "Spanish Regime in Missouri," vol. I, p. 4.

teen Indians. Until now Father Valentine had been officiating in the little log-church of Father Meurin's time and lived in the adjoining *presbytere*, as the priest's residence was then called. But he prevailed upon Governor Piernas to build a new church, more in keeping with the growing importance and dignity of St. Louis. Judge Wilson Primm, a scion of some of the earliest and best families of St. Louis, has given us a very interesting account of the erection of the second church-building in the village under the administration of Don Pedro Piernas. In a lecture delivered before the Missouri Historical Society he adverted to a drawing that had been made under his personal direction, representing the old church that had been demolished in 1820, according to the Government Record: "On the 26th of December 1774, the inhabitants of St. Louis met together in the government chamber in presence of Don Pedro Piernas, Lieutenant Governor of the Establishment of Illinois and of the dependencies belonging to his Catholic Majesty, of Reverend Father Valentine and Mr. Sarpy, Principal Church-warden, and determined upon the building of a church. The church is to be sixty feet long and thirty feet in width and is to be built of posts set in the ground. The posts are to be eighteen feet long hewed on both sides, to the width of six inches above ground, and to be of very sound white oak, and the square of the church to be fourteen feet high. The inhabitants are to furnish all the wood and other materials necessary for the construction of the building, according to an assessment to be made on each white and black person of the age of fourteen years and upwards, excepting wives and persons sixty years of age, who shall be exempt as to their persons only."<sup>16</sup>

The superintendent of the building and of the assessments is Pierre Baron, who, being present, accepts the office and promises to do his duty. The inhabitants add to him, Rene Kiercereau, Antoine Riviere, dit Bacasset, Joseph Taillon and Jacques Moise, "who must be present at the assessment and at the furnishing of materials."<sup>17</sup>

"There is to be a gallery around the church five feet wide supported by posts of good wood, set into the ground."<sup>18</sup>

The specifications were now worked out by the Committee and at their completion another Parish meeting was held in the chamber of the parsonage of said Parish of St. Louis, at the termination of Parochial Mass, for the purpose of letting out to the lowest bidder the "labor and construction of the church proposed to be erected."<sup>19</sup>

The specifications were read and explained with loud and intelligible voice. The lowest bid was that of Pierre Lupin Baron, carpenter and

<sup>16</sup> Printed in "The Church Progress," of St. Louis, February 18, 1917.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem.

joiner, "at the sum of twelve hundred livres in shaved deer skins, merchantable at this Post." Don Pedro Piernas signed the contract the 19th day of April 1775. But the building contractor, Pierre Baron, dying on the 28th day of January 1776, another Parish meeting was called by the new Lieutenant Governor Don Francisco Cruzat, at which the work under the same conditions was let out to Jean Cambas, he being the lowest bidder, at the sum of fourteen hundred and eighty livres, in shaved deer skins. The only new condition was that the building must be completed by the end of May.

Father Valentine did not enjoy his new church; for in June 1776 he was on his way down to New Orleans, never to return. To the people of St. Louis it must have been a source of regret to hear that their priest, Father Valentine, had suddenly departed, June 6, 1775, and would not return. Rumor was busy with the mysterious event. A letter arrived from Cahokia at M. Dutelets home in St. Louis, in which Father Valentine gives as his reason for his strange conduct, the fear of compromising the new Governor, M. Cruzat and himself.<sup>20</sup>

The Capuchin Friar did not tarry at Kaskaskia, as some have stated, but went directly to New Orleans to report to his Superior. We found his name in the Register of the Post of Arkansas, as having baptized thirty-five persons on April 19, 1772, one month before his coming to St. Louis. This would show that he came directly from New Orleans, stopping off for a day or two at the Post.

Later on we find Father Valentine at Cote des Allemands, and at Iberville. (1778-81.)

---

<sup>20</sup> His household goods were sold at auction after his departure from St. Louis. The catalogue of the sale is preserved in the Spanish Archives of the Missouri Historical Society at the Jefferson Memorial, St. Louis.

F Bernard de Compach mit ~~St~~

Gabriel Richard

Josephus Antonius Lutz  
Erob. Miss. apud Kansas ~~St~~

Em. Vautner  
Presby.

Peter P. Lefevre



## CHAPTER 2

### CIVIL ALLEGIANCE AND ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY

The battle of Quebec, in which Montcalm was killed, September 18th, 1759, sounded the death-knell of the power of France in the New World. But the last agony was protracted for a few years. By the Treaty of Paris, February 10th, 1763, Canada, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton and the French possessions to the East of the Mississippi, New Orleans excepted, were ceded to England.

This great river thus became the boundary between the English and French. But the extreme weakness of France, at the close of the seven years war had previously led to another act, that eventually retired the French from the North-American Continent. On the 3rd of November 1762, the Marquis of Grimaldi, the Ambassador of Spain, and the Duke de Choiseul, the French Premier, signed at Fontainebleau an Act by which the French King ceded to His Cousin of Spain, and to his successors forever, in full ownership, from the pure impulse of a generous heart the Country under the name of Louisiana. The Spanish monarch, rather reluctantly accepted the donation tendered to him by the generosity of his Most Christian Majesty, his cousin Louis XV.

From that date, November 13th, 1762, the Illinois Country west of the Mississippi, as well as Lower Louisiana with New Orleans was legally part and parcel of the world-empire of Spain: yet, as the donation, as well as the acceptance, was to be kept secret for a time, the King of France continued to act as sovereign of Louisiana. Theoretically the two powers, Spain and England, faced each other, with the Mississippi between them as boundary line; the actual establishment, however, of both powers in their new possessions was as yet a problem. The French Commandants, Noyon de Villiers and St. Ange de Bellerive remained in charge on the Illinois side, whilst on the west bank of the river there was nothing to hold, but the village of Ste. Genevieve and the Poste of Arkansas.

On the 15th of March, 1763, the King of France, announced that he had determined to disband the troops serving in Louisiana. Only four companies of infantry were to remain under the command of D'Abbadie. The Indians were highly incensed when they heard of the treaty of cession, and said, the King of France had no right to dispose of them and their lands to any other sovereign. The French Creoles, were dissatisfied but hopeful. An English convoy of about three hundred and fifty souls, officers, soldiers and children coming up the Mississippi to occupy the strategic points of their new possessions, were

harrassed again and again by the Indians, and at last driven back to New Orleans. The official transfer of the formerly French territory east of the Mississippi was effected on October 10th, 1765. St. Ange de Bellerive acted for France, Captain Thomas Stirling for England.

St. Ange and his thirty French soldiers immediately departed for the village of St. Louis, which he still regarded as French territory, until the official transfer to Spain should be made. The donation of Louisiana, that is the country west of the Mississippi with New Orleans, was made known by an official Letter of Louis XV, dated April 1764, more than two years after the cession. In this document the royal heart goes out to the people of Louisiana, who had served him and France so well. Among other things the Letter expresses the hope, that the King of Spain "will be pleased to instruct his Governor, that all ecclesiastics and religious communities shall continue to perform their functions of curates and missionaries, and to enjoy the rights, privileges and exceptions granted to them, that all the judges of ordinary jurisdiction, together with the Superior Council, shall continue to administer justice according to the laws, forms and usages of the colony."<sup>1</sup>

All this sounds very sweet and kind; but it was in this very year, 1764, that the Superior Council, headed by La Freniere and Foucault, struck the blow that crushed the only band of missionaries left in Louisiana. On the other hand, the Spanish government still delayed to take possession of the gift of King Louis. On January 20th, 1768, Aubry, the French Commander in New Orleans wrote: "I am in the most extraordinary position. I command for the King of France and, at the same time, I govern the Colony as if it belonged to the King of Spain. A French Commander is gradually moulding Frenchmen to Spanish domination."<sup>2</sup> The Spanish Governor Ulloa had no military power at his disposal. The spirit of independence was spreading among the French. The Superior Council, that had expelled the Jesuits, now expelled the few Spaniards with Ulloa, the Spanish Governor. It was a bloodless revolution, but a revolution nevertheless, and now Spain roused itself to quick and decisive action. Upon the arrival of the news of the revolution a cabinet council was held in which the Duke of Alba gave this brief and characteristic opinion; "that the King (of Spain) ought to retain Louisiana, on account of the extreme importance of the River Mississippi, being the fixed and settled limit of the English possession."<sup>3</sup> Don Alexander O'Reilly, the most distinguished military

---

<sup>1</sup> Gayarré, "History of Louisiana," vol. II, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Gayarré, vol. II, p. 185. "Considering that the French troops refused to obey the Spanish governor, Aubrey would remain the apparent and nominal chief of the Colony, but would govern according to the dictates of Ulloa," i. e. the Spanish governor. p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Gayarré, vol. II, p. 252.

officer of Spain at the time, was commissioned to take possession of Louisiana, with the significant remark: "Your Excellency knows very well that the loss of great interests is looked upon by Spain with indifference, but that it is not so with regard to insults."<sup>4</sup>

Don Alexander O'Reilly came, saw, and conquered, not by storm of battle, but by mere show of power. Some among the ringleaders paid the penalty of death for their rebellious acts, among them the deporters of the Jesuit Fathers in 1764. It was in 1769 that Louisiana became finally, but not forever, a Spanish Colony.<sup>5</sup>

A census of the population in the Mississippi Valley, exclusive of the Indians, was one of the first acts of Governor O'Reilly. The sum total of inhabitants, slaves included, was only 13,538.

Although the political change thus effected did not immediately bring about a change in the spiritual jurisdiction, it certainly was a step in that direction. The Bishop of Quebec, though now a subject of the King of England, remained Ordinary of Upper and Lower Louisiana, whilst the Superior of the Capuchins at New Orleans, Father Dagobert de Longwi continued to claim his authority as Vicar-General of Quebec. Yet the union of Church and State, which then obtained in Spain and France alike, placed certain obligations upon the State in regard to the temporal support of the Church and its ministers. Naturally, therefore, would the Spanish authorities prefer to deal with bishops and priests of their own nationality, whilst Rome, as a rule, was willing to sanction the change. His Catholic Majesty, as the King of Spain was called, had in the course of time received or assumed a number of exceptional privileges in the matter of appointment and recall of the Clergy, high and low. These so called prerogatives of the crown would certainly be put in use in the new colony of Louisiana, as they were practiced in the other parts of the Spanish realm. But for the first few years nothing was attempted in the matter of placing the colony under Spanish ecclesiastical control, because there was so very little to be controlled, and that little so very hard to reach. The Bishop of Quebec, being in possession, was left in possession, although the leading men of New Orleans and the Capuchin Superior, were already making trouble for their Spiritual Head. After the pacification of the country the jurisdiction of Quebec in all Louisiana, lapsed into that of Santiago de Cuba, although the Pope delayed his recognition of the royal edict until 1777. Bishop Briand of Quebec was glad to be relieved of the burden. In April 1767 he wrote to Father Meurin: "As yet I have no news from New Orleans. The difficulty of governing from such a distance, or finding persons in whom to confide, the troubles which the Capuchins have always stirred up there, their bad conduct, their disobedience,

---

<sup>4</sup> Gayarré, vol. II, p. 266.

<sup>5</sup> For a life-sketch of Don Alexandro O'Reilly see Gayarré, vol. II, p. 283.

their twenty-three years of stubborn resistance to their Ordinary, all these considerations have so disgusted and harrassed me, that I have an extreme repugnance to assume charge of that section, and I assure you, that I would not be sorry if the Spanish government wished it to be dependent on one of their dioceses in America."<sup>6</sup> This much is sufficiently plain, that the Bishop of Quebec gave his full consent to the dismemberment of his diocese by the royal decree, although he could not consider himself altogether relieved of responsibility until Rome approved of the act. Early in June of the year 1772 the Spanish Capuchins, P. Cyrillo de Barcelona, in company with four other Capuchins, arrived in New Orleans, with the commission from the Bishop of Santiago de Cuba, James Joseph Echeverria to investigate the religious conditions in the new Province. By request of Father Cyrillo, Father Dagobert was continued in his office as Superior, and consequently as Vicar-General of the Bishop of Quebec. But Father Cyrillo, as the representative of the Bishop of Santiago, acted independently of Father Dagobert, first as Vicar-General and, from 1781 on, as Bishop of Tricala, and Auxiliary for Louisiana. In 1787 the diocese of Santiago di Cuba was dismembered, all Louisiana and the Floridas being assigned to the new diocese of St. Christopher de Havana. The Bishop of Havana, Joseph de Trespalacios, retained Bishop Cyrillo as his auxiliary for Louisiana. On April 25th, 1792, another dismemberment occurred, and Louisiana and the Floridas were erected into a diocese, the Cathedral of which was fixed in New Orleans. The Bishop of the new diocese, Louis Peñalver y Cardenas, arrived in New Orleans on July 17th, 1795. The official name of the diocese was Louisiana and the Floridas, although its Bishops sometimes assumed the style of Bishop of New Orleans. When on July 20th, 1802, the Louisiana territory was returned to France by Spain and, less than a year later, sold by France to the United States, April 30th, 1803, Bishop Peñalver left New Orleans for Guatamala. The western portion of Upper Louisiana, that is the territory of the future diocese of St. Louis, was now under Spanish rule in spiritual as well as temporal matters, and the parishes were provided with priests at the expense of the Spanish government.

But, what were the fortunes of its eastern portion that was left in the power of heretical England? What was the condition of religion and public morals in the ancient Catholic settlements of the Illinois Country along the eastern borders of the Mississippi? Dark and threatening were the clouds that had settled down over the former scenes of peace. There was but one priest left in all Upper Louisiana. The devoted son of St. Francis, Father Luke Collet at Fort Chartres, a venerable man, bowed down by the

---

<sup>6</sup> Alvord and Carter, "The New Regime, 1765-1767," in *British Series*, vol. II, p. 560.

weight of many years of patient toil and sorrow in the cause of Christ. The Bishop of Quebec had sent him to the Illinois Missions, and the Frenchman's natural love for the French cause had kept him an exile from Canada, until now. But he and he alone would not forsake his post of honor, though the current of his life was well nigh spent. But who was his bishop after Canada itself was lost to the English? Father Collet surely had no doubts about the matter: the Bishop of Quebec was still his Ordinary. To him he looked for guidance and support. But for a time there was no bishop at Quebec. Bishop Pontbriand had died in June 1760, and the Bishop-Elect, John Oliver Briand, was debarred by English Tyranny from receiving consecration. The Church had no Bishop in the English colonies along the Atlantic seaboard. In fact only two of the thirteen colonies, Maryland and Pennsylvania permitted the exercise of the Catholic religion. The little band of heroic priests of these two liberal colonies acted under the jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of London, who at that time was Bishop Challoner. Canada and all the French territory on the eastern borders of the Mississippi now belonged to England. "In consequence of this increase of British territory," says Burton, "Bishop Challoner had to consider whether under the terms of his faculties, he was or was not responsible for the spiritual well-being of Canada and the other new possessions."<sup>7</sup> Rome did not give a definite answer, but asked for further information. Quebec retained possession. At last, Bishop Briand, in order to bring peace to his distracted people, resigned in favor of Bishop D'Esglis, who was persona grata with the British authorities. This paved the way for the so-called "Quebec Act," passed by Parliament in 1774, an Act which gave the Canadians the free exercise of the Catholic religion as under the former French rule. It was this Act of Justice that healed the wound of Canada's being torn from her mother France, and it was the unexpectedness of it that won the Canadian's loyalty and good will for her English rulers. The successive Bishops of Quebec continued to exercise their hereditary right and power on the eastern borders of the Mississippi, in Cahokia, Kaskaskia, Fort Chartres and Vincennes, even after the appointment of Carroll as Prefect Apostolic and Bishop of Baltimore. Bishop Carroll's jurisdiction over the entire territory to the Spanish boundary, the Mississippi River, was not formally established until January 29th, 1791.<sup>8</sup>

But previous to that, on October 6th, 1788, Bishop Hubert of Quebec and the Prefect Apostolic at Baltimore, John Carroll, had arranged a *modus vivendi*, Bishop Hubert wrote: "It is true that the settlements in the country of the Illinois are incontestably in the diocese of Quebec,

---

<sup>7</sup> Guilday, "Life and Times of John Carroll," p. 148.

<sup>8</sup> Shea, John G. "Life and Times of Most Rev. John Carroll," p. 382.

according to our original grant, and also that the Seminary of Quebec, for that reason, long had the right to nominate a Superior among the Tamarois, a prerogative which the said Seminary resigned in favor of the Bishop of Quebec. Be that as it may, I believe it is prudent for us under the circumstances, to accommodate ourselves to the new order of things, although I be not at liberty to assent to the dismemberment of this part of my diocese without the consent of my Coadjutor and of my clergy. Divine Providence having permitted that the Illinois should have fallen into the power of the United States, the spiritual charge of which is confided to your care, I urgently beseech you to continue in the meantime to provide for these missions, as it would be difficult for me to supply them myself without, perhaps, giving some offense to the British government."<sup>9</sup> This letter proves among other things that during the British period the spiritual authority in the country east of the Mississippi remained vested in the Bishop of Quebec.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Letter of Bishop Hubert to Bishop Carroll in Guilday, "Life and Times of John Carroll," p. 297.

<sup>10</sup> The ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Mississippi Valley suffered a number of changes, generally following the changes of political authority. The earliest priests in Canada, Recollets and seculars, derived their jurisdiction from the Archbishop of Rouen, in Normandy, but after the appointment of Bishop Laval, all the priests in Canada and New France were dependent on the Bishop of Quebec. The Vicariate Apostolic and, later on, the Diocese of Quebec, included all Canada and Louisiana, that is the territory on both sides of the Mississippi River. This condition lasted from October 1st, 1674 until November 3rd, 1762, when the part of Louisiana west of the Mississippi river together with the city and territory of New Orleans was ceded to Spain and in consequence passed under the jurisdiction of Santiago de Cuba. Bishop Hubert, of Quebec, in his Report to Rome in 1792 states: "This latter Province, Louisiana, having passed over to Spanish domination, the Bishop of Quebec has first transferred his jurisdiction to the Bishops of Havana." The correct title of the Spanish diocese was Santiago de Cuba, but as the Bishop's residence was at Havana, the diocese generally went by that name.

Havana, however, became a diocese in its own right in 1787. During the time in which Louisiana was a part of the diocese of Santiago de Cuba, in 1772, Bishop James Joseph de Echevarria sent the Capuchin Father Fray Cyrillo de Barcellona, his auxiliary Bishop, to reside at New Orleans. On April 25th, 1793, by decree of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, Louisiana and the Floridas were dismembered from the See of Havana and erected into a diocese, the Cathedral of which was fixed in New Orleans.

As a useful help to a better understanding of the vexed problem of Ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the Mississippi Valley we subjoin a kind of diagram taken from the "Catholic Historical Review," vol. II, p. 351:

1. Territory West of the Mississippi:
  1. 1658-1674—Vicariate Apostolic of Canada.
  2. 1674-1759—Diocese of Quebec.
  3. 1759-1787—Diocese of Santiago, Cuba and St. Christopher de Havanna.
  4. 1787-1825—Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas.
2. Territory East of the Mississippi.
  1. 1658-1674—Vicariate of Canada.
  2. 1674-1784—Diocese of Quebec.
  3. 1784-1789—John Carroll, Prefect Apostolic of the United States.
  4. 1789-1808—Diocese of Baltimore.
  5. 1808-1834—Diocese of Bardstown.

## CHAPTER 3

### RETURN OF FATHER SEBASTIAN MEURIN

We have in a former chapter narrated Father Watrin's account of the Jesuit exodus from Kaskaskia to New Orleans and their treatment there. The Capuchins received them kindly, the Superior Council with haughty arrogance. Father Meurin could not forget the tears and prayers of his neophytes that he would stay with them, or if he had to leave, to come back to them as soon as he could. He petitioned the Superior Council for leave to return to the Illinois, not as a Jesuit, but as a secular priest and missionary. To his own surprise the Council acceded to his request. Father Meurin then begged to be allowed to start on the upward voyage in January; the Council delayed its permission until the end of February. "This was a brave resolution," says Father Watrin in praise of Father Meurin, after the sale of all the property of the Jesuits, he could not count upon any fund for his subsistence, the French were under no obligation to him, and the savages have more need of receiving than means for giving; furthermore, the health of this Father was very poor, as it had always been during the twenty-one years which he had spent in Louisiana. But he knew in what danger the Illinois neophytes were of soon forgetting religion, if they remained long without missionaries; he therefore counted as nothing all the other inconveniences, provided he could resume the duties of his mission. His request was granted and a promise was given to him that a pension of six hundred livres would be asked for him at the court."<sup>1</sup>

Father Meurin was informed by the Council that the diocese of Quebec no longer included Louisiana. In order to obtain permission to return to the Illinois country he was obliged to sign a document, that he would recognize no other ecclesiastical superior than the Superior of the Capuchins at New Orleans, and that he would take up his residence in Sté. Genevieve. Of course, this might be true; Father Meurin had no means to test the truth of the assertion. But as to his faculties, he had no misgivings. If the Illinois country was still under the Bishop of Quebec, as he believed, he was still entitled to all the rights he enjoyed before from Quebec. If Quebec's power had lapsed, then the Superior of the Capuchins gave valid faculties. So he signed the document, renouncing his allegiance to Quebec only on condition that the change of jurisdiction was a fact.

---

<sup>1</sup> Alvord and Carter, "The Critical Period, 1763-1765," p. 118.

"About this time" as Father Metzger, S. J. shows in his article on Sebastian Louis Meurin,<sup>2</sup> "he made application at Rome for very extensive powers which were granted the following year." On September 4, 1765, the Holy Office decreed that His Holiness should be asked to grant the power of dispensing in cases of marriage which involved "disparitas cultus," to Father Meurin, who had petitioned for this power. That same day the Holy Father "granted for a triennium from the date of receipt, this extraordinary faculty, 'dispensandi super disparitate cultus in matrimoniorum celebratione,' for the relief of a mission almost destitute of every aid, and for the spiritual comfort of a Christian flock, so far remote by sea and land."<sup>3</sup> In this way Father Meurin "received from the Holy See for his country of the Illinois extraordinary faculties, such as had never been granted to any 'bishops, vicars apostolic or missionaries in America.'"<sup>4</sup>

Leaving New Orleans in the middle of February, 1764, the truly Apostolic man stopped over at the Post of Arkansas on March 1, 1764, and baptized thirteen persons, as "the archives of the Station of Arcansa" attest. He must have arrived at Ste. Genevieve towards the end of May, as the journey up-stream usually required ninety days at least. But Ste. Genevieve was only one of the missionary's cares. There was Kaskaskia with its French and Indian Catholics, there was Cahokia, even now a thriving commercial town, and there was St. Louis, the newly founded village on the western bank of the river. Calls there came for spiritual assistance from Vincennes on the Wabash, and from isolated mining camps to the west of Ste. Genevieve. From regions utterly unknown, Catholics would come to Father Meurin in Ste. Genevieve, as we learn from his entry of a burial: "I know neither the family, nor the parish, nor where or when he was born."

"The first entry, in the Ste. Genevieve parish records, is a baptism conferred May 13, 1764, on the son of Louis and Janette, negro slaves of Jean Baptiste Beauvais of Kaskaskia, the child was christened Louis. The first marriage of which Meurin makes record under date of October 30th, 1764, is a very interesting case, the parties being Mark Constantinot of Canada, and Susan Henn, of German parentage, who had settled in Pennsylvania. As both had been carried into slavery by the Shawnee Indians some five years previous, they contracted a natural marriage, which was blessed with two daughters. Availing themselves of a favorable opportunity for escape, they fled from captivity and on

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vols. III and IV. Father Metzger's exhaustive study of Father Meurin's life and times deserves hearty recognition. This and the following chapter are greatly indebted to it.

<sup>3</sup> Hughes, Thomas, S. J., "The History of the Society of Jesus in North America," Text Vol. II, p. 589, quoted by Metzger, l. c.

<sup>4</sup> Hughes, op. cit. p. 598.

October 30th presented themselves to Father Meurin to have him pronounce the church's blessing on their union.<sup>5</sup> It is of interest to note that Father Meurin styles himself "pretre missionnaire," or "curé aux Illinois," or finally "curé aux pays des Illinois," while he designates the church in Ste. Genevieve as "L'Eglise de Saint Joachim aux Illinois," or, "en la paroisse de St. Jqachim de Ste. Genevieve" and finally "a Ste. Genevieve." The years 1766 and 1767 mark the period of his greatest activity in Ste. Genevieve as is evidenced by the parish records, for in 1766 he baptized thirty-one persons and married five couples, while in 1767 he baptized twenty-eight persons and married eight parties. A comparative study of his duties and activities at Sainte Genevieve and at Kaskaskia as recorded in the official documents of both places is not without interest.

The Parish records both of Baptisms and Marriages show a constant annual increase for Ste. Genevieve and a proportionate decrease for Kaskaskia. The newer town was in the ascendant, the older town in rapid decline. "The last entry for this period in Father Meurin's hand is the baptism on October 22, 1768, after which Father Gibault cared for the spiritual wants of the people and Meurin kept away from Ste. Genevieve, save on two occasions."

On the 26th day of August 1767 Father Meurin received from Bishop Briand the appointment as Vicar-General for the Illinois country. This honor and burden came in consequence of a letter that the lone missionary in the wilderness had sent to the newly-consecrated Bishop of Quebec, Briand, in which the spiritual condition of his vast field of labor was graphically described. The fears and hopes of Father Meurin struck a responsive chord in the heart of the Bishop who had experienced in his own person the malice and hatred of the world. We here give the main parts of Father Meurin's letter to Bishop Briand:

"The country of the Illinois is nothing more than six villages of about fifty to eighty fires each, not including the slaves whose number is sufficiently great. Each of these villages on account of the distance between them and their situation, demands a priest; namely, in the English territory, the Parish of the Immaculate Conception at Kaskaskia, that of St. Joseph at Prairie du Rocher, and the Parish of the Holy Family. In the French or Spanish territory beyond the river are situated the villages of Ste. Genevieve with the title of St. Joachim on which are dependent the Salines and the Mines; and thirty leagues above is the new village called St. Louis which has been formed out of the ruins of St. Philippe and Fort de Chartres. These two villages are as large as the first in inhabitants or slaves, red or black.

"St. Joachim or St. Genevieve is the place of my residence, as it was ordained by the conditions of my return to the country. It is

---

<sup>5</sup> Rozier's "History of the Early Settlement of the Mississippi Valley," p. 118.

from there that I come every springtime and go through the other villages for Easter. I return thither again in the autumn and every time that I am called for the sick. This is all my infirmities and my means can permit me. Still this is disagreeable and prejudicial to the people of Ste. Genevieve who alone nourish and support me; and they complain of it. With only these visits the people, and especially the children and slaves, are lacking sufficient instruction; and since they are deprived of the pastoral vigilance they are insensibly losing piety and abandoning themselves to vices. There are here still many families in which religion rules and who fear with reason that it will become extinct with them. They join in prayer with me that you have pity on their children and send them at least two or three priests, if your Highness cannot send the four or five that are needed. One of these should have the title Grand Vicar of your Highness. I try to maintain in my absence the use of the offices and prayers to assist in the sanctification of Sundays and saints' days. There are already a number who no longer attend church or who seem to come there only to show their lack of respect for it. Some intractable and insolent people say, haughtily enough, that I have no title, and that I am not their Pastor, that I have no right to give them advice, and that they are not obliged to listen to me. They would not have dared to speak this in the time of M. Stirling<sup>6</sup> and Farmer,<sup>7</sup> commandants, from whom I had every protection. Under the command of these two first no person dared to attempt the least indecency."

"The church of Ste. Anne has, for almost a year, been without roof, doors and windows, and with walls broken or badly closed, because the church wardens have changed their home and village without informing me or having others elected; and they left the keys to the beadle who withdrew also and left them with an inhabitant, and thus they pass from one to another. When finally I was informed, I went there and demanded and obtained from the English commandant his consent to the removal of the furniture of the church of Ste. Anne to the chapel of St. Joseph at Prairie du Rocher. I myself carried the sacred vessels, accompanied by the one to whom the keys had been given. There was petition upon petition from the two single inhabitants who remained there and assured the commandant that the church and furniture belonged to them personally. An order was given me to bring back the sacred vessels and to leave them all in the said church of Ste. Anne. I

---

<sup>6</sup> Captain Thomas Stirling came to America in 1758. As British Commissioner he accepted the cession of the Illinois country in March 1765, at Fort Chartres and became commandant of the colony.

<sup>7</sup> Major Robert Farmar succeeded Stirling as Commandant on December 2, 1765, to be superseded by Lt. Col. John Reed, in the summer of 1766. Father Meurin was on good terms with Stirling and Farmar but not with Reed.

did not believe it my duty to go there. I wrote in the form of a petition drawn up in the name of your chapter, since I did not know that it should be done in the name of Your Highness; I was obliged to stand a suit; my adversaries insisted upon I know not what yet; I lost your suit; I wrote again; English judges were named, and the process will be ended when it shall please God and Your Highness. The church is getting always in a worse condition; open on every side, it has served, I am told, as a den for beasts during winter. The furniture and ornaments are still there and I know not in what state. I await your orders and the repentance of the opponents. The sacred vessels are still at *Prairie du Rocher*.

“Post Vincennes on the Wabash, among the Miami Piankashaw, is as large as our best villages here and has still greater need of a missionary. Disorder has always been great there, but it has increased in the last three years. Some come here to be married or to make their Easter duty. The majority do not wish to, nor can they do it. The guardian of the church there publishes the banns for three Sundays; to those who wish to come here he gives a certificate of publication without opposition, which I myself republish before marrying them. Those who do not wish to come declare in a loud voice in their church their mutual consent. Can such a marriage be permitted?

“Before I returned to the Illinois, I was assured at New Orleans that Louisiana was not and would no longer be in the diocese of Quebec. I was made to promise and sign that I would no longer recognise any other ecclesiastical superior than the Reverend Father Superior of the Capuchins, who alone had and would have all jurisdiction, that on the first occasion they would give me a certificate of it if I required. It is on this condition that I signed, adding that when it should please his Holiness to give the jurisdiction to the highest chief of the Negroes, I should be submissive to him as to one meriting more than Bishops. Consequently, as my signature was given upon the promise of a confirmation which has not yet come, I am bound no longer with any relations with Rome or with Quebec. That is what has hindered me up to the present from writing to the Grand Vicars of the diocese, especially since I have not found a safe opportunity by land as I have today by MM. Despins and Beauvais, who are going to Montreal, and should return this next autumn. They have volunteered to bring, at their own expense, the missionaries you appoint for this place, and the parishioners have promised to reimburse them. The great need of missionaries for this country has forced me to knock at all doors in order to obtain some. . . . While I am awaiting the effects of Your pastoral charity, I shall continue to make use of the former powers which I received from M. Mercier, twenty-five years ago, which have been continued by MM. Laurent and Forget, the latter of whom verbally left me at his departure all that he had

received. The Grand Vicar whom you will send to us will limit them as he shall judge fitting and will find me as did his predecessor, with all zeal and possible respect, my lord, Your Highness, very humble and very obedient servant, Sebastian Louis Meurin, missionary priest."<sup>8</sup>

It was a saddening view that the missionary presented to his Bishop: but it was strictly in accordance with the facts. Even the British authorities, though indifferent to the Catholic religion, saw the necessity of providing for the spiritual wants of their French subjects. Captain Thomas Stirling wrote to General Gage: "The inhabitants complain very much for want of Priests, there is but one now remains, the rest either having died or gone away, and he (Meurin) stays on the other side. He was formerly a Jesuit and would have been sent away likewise, if the Kaskaskia Indians, to whom he was priest, had not insisted upon his staying, which the French allowed him to do upon his renouncing Jesuitism and turning Sulpician. This priest might be of great use to us, if he was brought over to this side, which I make no doubt might be effectuated, provided his former appointments were allowed him, which was 600 livres pr. annum from the King, as Priest to the Indians."<sup>9</sup>

Father Meurin renewed his petition, before receiving an answer to his first letter: "I am sixty-one years old, I can no longer supply the spiritual needs of this country, where the most robust man could not serve long, especially as it is divided by a very rapid and dangerous river. Four priests are necessary; if you can give only one, he should be appointed for Kaskaskia. At this moment I am called on to go to a man who is dangerously ill at Ste. Genevieve, thirty leagues from Cahokia, where I have been only three days. I am forced to leave undone more than three-fourths of the work to be done here. I beg you, my Lord, to have pity on this part of your flock and on me."<sup>10</sup>

Whilst the weary missionary was living in a fond delusion of hope that the Bishop would relieve him of a part of his burden, the Bishop only burdened him with a new and dangerous honor. His words were: "I send you letters of appointment as Grand Vicar in the most extended terms; you will use them wherever you may chance to be, throughout this part of my diocese whose limits are immense and unknown even to myself; at least it is certain that they extend to all lands which the French have possessed in North America."<sup>11</sup>

After some remarks about the Capuchins and Ursulines in New Orleans His Grace continues: "If you think that the government

<sup>8</sup> Alvord and Carter, "The New Regime," pp. 522-529. Printed in Carayon, "Banissement des Jesuites," p. 58.

<sup>9</sup> Alvord and Carter, op. cit. p. 124. That Meurin had turned Sulpician is a mistake of Stirling's.

<sup>10</sup> Alvord and Carter, op. cit. p. 568-569.

<sup>11</sup> Alvord and Carter, op. cit. p. 560.

authorizes and supports you, you could use your powers even in New Orleans, and exercise there your authority over the whole secular and regular clergy, which may be there, and nominate for the sisters the confessor whom they wish, and give limited letters as Grand Vicar to one of the Capuchins whom you judge most worthy."<sup>12</sup>

It was indeed a dizzy height to which Briand had raised Meurin. The appointment only filled the gentle missionary with consternation instead of joy and pride.

With sincere gratitude for the Bishop's very kind mark of confidence, Father Meurin expresses his deep solicitude in regard to possible effects of his appointment: "My letters of last spring must have omitted to inform you of my age, and of my weakness of body and mind. I retain only a small portion of weak judgment, have no memory, and possess still less firmness. I need a guide both for the soul and for the body; for my eyes, my ears, and my legs likewise are very feeble. I am no longer good for anything but to be laid in the ground. I trust, Monsigneur, that you will be good enough to forgive me for having neither carried nor sent your graces and favors to New Orleans, according to your letters and instructions,—of which I have thought proper to let even our dear Ursulines remain ignorant, lest they might have occasion for sorrow, which they do not deserve."<sup>13</sup> As to the consequences touching himself, Father Meurin says: "How would I have been received there after having stated over my own signature (in order to obtain permission to return to the Illinois) that I would always act as Vicar of the Reverend Capuchin Fathers,—subject to their visits, their reprimands, and corrections, and to their jurisdiction, etc., which was to be the only one throughout the Mississippi. As soon as they, the Spanish authorities heard, through the voyageurs, that you honored me with the appointment as Vicar-General, a warrant of proscription was issued against me; and it would have been executed had I not, on being warned thereof by a friend in authority, escaped from it by withdrawing to English territory. There, on at once taking the oath of allegiance as a former resident, I secured myself against the Spanish prosecutions,—which declare that I am a criminal, because I have received jurisdiction from Quebec, which is so opposed to the intentions and interests of Spain."<sup>14</sup>

Father Meurin, having taken up his residence on British soil, had occasion to carry out the Bishop's instructions in regard to the mission property at Cahokia. This property as we have seen, was sold by Father Forget Duverger, the last representative of the Seminary of the Priests of the Foreign Mission, to one Sieur Lagrange, and by him conveyed to

<sup>12</sup> Alvord and Carter, op. cit. p. 561.

<sup>13</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 71, p. 385 note.

<sup>14</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 71, passim.

Sieur Joutard. The latter was now bargaining to sell it to an Englishman. As the property was originally granted to the Missionary Society of Quebec Seminary, and as Father Forget had received no power of sale from the Quebec Seminary, the various sales were void. Hence Father Meurin protested against the proposed action of Sieur Joutard as illegal. To the Bishop he writes: "About a month ago, having learnt that Sieur Joutard was bargaining to resell it to an Englishman, I went to oppose the sale on behalf of the Gentlemen of your Seminary, who claim this property as still belonging to them, through its having been sold, without their power of attorney and without their knowledge by the person who was but the steward thereof. I also undertook to support, by the use of your name, Monseigneur, my contention for the preservation of all property belonging to the churches for their maintenance and that of the missionaries whom You deign to employ. Mr. Forbes, the commandant, (there is no civil government here as yet), asked me for the letters containing my commission. I showed him Your letters, and those of Monsieur the Superior. As regards the letters conferring the appointment of Vicar-General, he replied, that, inasmuch as Monsieur de Gage had given no instructions respecting the episcopacy and the office of Vicar-General, he could not take cognizance of them; and that this seemed purely a scheme on Your part and mine. He therefore expressly forbade me to use the letters, or to assume the title of Vicar-General in any letter, or deed, or in public, until he should receive an answer from his General regarding both your jurisdiction in the country and the Cahokia property. He promised me, however, that the latter should not be offered for sale until then. Sieur Joutard goes to Canada, and thence to New York or London, to obtain release from the possession of the said estate. The land at Fort Chartres is also, for the same reason, in danger of being carried away by the river. I have caused to be removed and conveyed to la Prairie du Rocher the remains of Monsieur Gagnon and Reverend Father Luc, (Luke) a Recollet, both worthy missionaries . . . . This is all I can do."

"There is also in this village of the Kaskaskias, the property of the Jesuits which was unjustly seized, confiscated and sold by the French government after the cession of the country to England. If your Lordship or your missionaries in Canada wish to revindicate it, as for myself I ask nothing. I am too old. But I would always be grieved to see the chapel and cemetery profaned, being now used as a garden and storehouse by the English, who rent them from Sieur Jean Baptiste Beauvais—who, under the decree of confiscation and the contract of sale and purchase of the property, was obliged to demolish the chapel and leave its site and that of the cemetery uncultivated under the debris. He says that the subdelegate, the executor of the decree, has since sold the property to him. By what right? The presses used for the vestments

and sacred vessels are now used in his apartments, as well as the altarcruets and the floor."

"During the four years while I have ministered to these English parishes, I have received no tithes therefrom; I have received naught but what was given me out of charity by some, and the fees for masses. I have always exhorted them to pay the tithes to the fabrique, for the support of the churches and of the missionary, when one comes. They, I mean the rich ones, have always claimed that they owe nothing when there is no resident pastor."<sup>15</sup>

In 1768 Father Meurin made the first attempt on British Territory to hold the Corpus Christi Procession. At the request of the habitants, he asked the commandants to allow the militia to turn out under arms, as is the custom among the Roman Catholics, to escort the Blessed Sacrament. This they refused. The weather was not settled; the Father was indisposed and fatigued, through having had a procession very early on the other side, at Ste. Genevieve. In Kaskaskia he had one only in the Church, and likewise on the day of the octave.

---

<sup>15</sup> "Jesuit Relations," vol. 71, pp. 33-34.

## MEURIN AND GIBAULT

At last the prayers and importunities of Father Meurin are beginning to bring results, not indeed in the measure of his expectations, but after all, in a very efficient way. Father Pierre Gibault arrives from Quebec at Kaskaskia towards the end of September 1768, in the quality of Vicar General of the Illinois Country, with the entire territory as his missionary field. He is a native of Montreal, born April 7th, 1737. He made his studies at the expense of the Quebec Seminary, and was destined for the Illinois missions from the beginning. The Bishop desired him to reside at Cahokia, but Father Meurin gladly left him in charge of Kaskaskia, as the more central and otherwise more desirable location. Father Gibault was in the prime of manhood, full of fiery energy, so that Father Meurin expressed the fear that, being so full of zeal, he would not last long. He had done wonderful things at Mackinac during his short stay at that old Jesuit foundation. Bishop Briand took occasion to show his high regard for the young man. Only one or two mistakes the missionary had made which added a stroke of weakness to the otherwise ideal picture. "I am a little displeased with him," writes the Bishop, "for having taken his mother with him without letting me know beforehand. Such conduct scarcely becomes a missionary, who seeks, and should seek, God alone. It was for this that I ordained him. I would not have sent him on so distant a mission without his consent. If he had told me that he must of necessity have his mother with him, I would most probably not have assigned him to that good work but would have put him in charge of a parish in this colony. It is my firm conviction that if a priest is to do justice to his office and fulfill his ministry worthily in your part of the country he cannot have his parents with him nor be encumbered by a large household. In other respects Father Gibault seems to be possessed of the qualities and disposition necessary for success."<sup>1</sup> The other mistake was his assisting at the marriage of a Frenchman with an Indian woman, a practice that was rather common in the Illinois, but forbidden in Canada. These things may appear insignificant, but in a man of Gibault's character and position they were regarded as rather serious. A more serious matter in the estima-

---

<sup>1</sup> Carayon, "*Bannissement des Jesuites de la Louisiana*," is the best collection of Father Meurin's correspondence with the Bishop of Quebec. The present extract is found on p. 83. Cf. Metzger, "*Sebastian Louis Meurin*," in "*Illinois Catholic Historical Review*," vol. IV, p. 46.



*Gibault s.w. g.l.*



tion of Father Meurin was the young missionary's illness. "Father Gibault has been ill practically ever since his arrival" writes Father Meurin, "At first he suffered from a severe fever and was in danger; of late a slight but persistent fever saps his strength. However, his courage buoys him up and enables him to perform his chief duties in the parish of the Immaculate Conception of the Kaskaskias. He thought it best to make Kaskaskia his permanent residence, and go from time to time to the Spanish colony of Ste. Genevieve, from which I, as a Jesuit, was banished. Such was his good fortune that he succeeded in getting almost all the people in these two parishes to perform their Easter duty, which most of them had neglected for years."<sup>2</sup> But Father Gibault's health improved from day to day, and the labors and privations of the ministry only served to harden him against the evil influences of exposure to bad weather, extended trips through forests and over mountains, the crossing of rivers and torrents. Indeed the Lord, as Father Meurin prayed, renewed His ancient miracles in his behalf. "There remained only the danger of eventual discouragement. For this country is in such a wretched condition that long before we have completed our work in one place the stations where we worked earlier have returned to their original condition, if not indeed to a worse condition, since we cannot possibly give enough time to any locality to root out evil practices and accustom the people to righteous living."<sup>3</sup> Father Gibault's work was clearly marked out for him by Father Meurin: "I never miss an opportunity to explain to him that the inhabitants of St. Louis, of Cahokia, of Prairie du Rocher, Ste. Genevieve and Vincennes are as much his parishioners as the people of Kaskaskia, to whom he seems inclined to confine himself. Thus the whole country would become one great parish, until there were priests in all the villages."<sup>4</sup> Father Gibault soon realized the full extent of his duty. But his first and most pressing obligation was to the people of Kaskaskia.

Meanwhile Father Meurin took up his work at Cahokia, across the river from St. Louis, as he informs Bishop Briand in 1768: "up to the present I have had charge of the parish of the Holy Family among the Cahokias or Tamarois, from the time I came here in autumn till Christmas, from the end of January till Easter, and then I stayed here till the Ascension. I have spent the last twelve days here, ministering likewise to the inhabitants of Saint Louis, the principal village of the Spanish colony, from which I was banished. I baptise and marry them, hear their confessions and give them Communion, etc.; I only go to

---

<sup>2</sup> Carayon, *op. cit.* p. 84, Englished in Metzger's article, "Louisiana Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Carayon, *op. cit.* p. 84, Metzger, l. c., p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Carayon, *op. cit.* Metzger, l. c., p. 48.

Saint Louis in case of sickness and then only at night and incognito. From here I shall go to Prairie du Rocher, a little village of twenty people, including two who are at Fort Chartres, one league from here, and four men living at Saint Philip at a distance of three leagues. I retired to Prairie du Rocher so that new missionaries might have a better field for the exercise of their zeal and talent and might find it easier to secure a livelihood. As we hoped for at least two missionaries, this little parish, which is part of Sainte Anne at Fort Chartres, invited me to spend the rest of my days here, promising to build me a parish house and to furnish everything I needed for the rest of my life, no matter what infirmities might come upon me. Because of this I promised not to abandon them unless I were absolutely forced to do so, stipulating, however, that I reserved the right to go to the aid of the other villages so long as I could do so and they needed my ministrations. I likewise promised to bequeath to their church everything I had received from them or from any other source, providing no other Jesuits returned to this country. These people furnished me with a servant, and a horse and carriage for my journeys, no doubt hoping thus to keep me alive the longer. May God reward them for their kindness. There is nothing I could reasonably desire; I am in good health and I am unburdened by temporal care. Is this not too much, Monseigneur, for a poor religious, who has been banished, condemned to death, and escaped several times from the scaffold, or at least from the mines? But let us not declare the battle won—all of these evils may return. On one occasion when I was perhaps a trifle too enthusiastic in my defense of the Gentlemen of your seminary in the presence of the English who came in the King's name to take possession of the house, ground, etc., of the mission among the Tamarois, Mr. Morgan, President of Justice, told me that I should not forget that I had been banished by the Spanish, and that my position among the English was precarious. Nevertheless, I am still here, living now, as I formerly did, in the mission house, and taking Father Gibault's place."<sup>5</sup>

And so they labored in unison for the glory of God and the peace to men of good will, Meurin, the last representative of the old order, Gibault, the high minded herald of the new, both rejoicing alike if the work was done, whether it was done by the one or the other, whether the glory of doing it redounded to the old or the young. They both served a Master that leaves no one go without his reward.

One more severe trial awaited the lonely Jesuit in his seclusion at Prairie du Rocher. The suppression of the Society of Jesus by Pope

---

<sup>5</sup> Carayon, *op. cit.* Metzger, l. c., p. 47-48.

Clement XIV in 1774.<sup>6</sup> Heretofore the persecution of the Jesuits had been conducted by Kings and parliaments and Superior Councils, who absolutely lacked jurisdiction. But now the Pope had spoken, though reluctantly, and all was over, as men thought. Heretofore the faithful son of St. Ignatius "did not consider it necessary to change anything whatsoever, either in my religious habit, or in the breviary, Masses, and Feasts, proper to or granted to the Society of Jesus."<sup>7</sup> But now, he asks to be received as a member of the diocesan clergy of Quebec and then in the beautiful spirit of humility he adds: "I shall consider myself very happy, if, in the short time I have still to live, I am able to repair the acts of cowardice and negligence of which I have been guilty during the past thirty-three years. If you will be so kind as to adopt me, I am convinced that you will forgive me and will ask mercy for me."<sup>8</sup> Father Meurin was the very soul of humility and divine charity. His last words recorded for us were words of praise bestowed upon his people of the Illinois and the Seminary priests whom he had known in the long ago. Let them be this epitaph: "The people of this country are not any worse than those of Canada. They are even more good than bad. This is sometimes my only consolation, as it was the consolation of Fathers Thaumer, Mercier, Gagnon and Laurens, all very worthy priests of this diocese, whose memory is still in benediction here."<sup>9</sup> There are many writers of note, who have placed on record the remarkable career of Father Pierre Gibault, as missionary and pastor of souls, as the Grand Vicar for many years of the Bishops of Quebec, and as a public benefactor and patriot.<sup>10</sup> In the wide compass of a diocesan history strange and memorable events of such a career cannot be given in detail. An adequate history of Father Gibault and his Times is still a desideratum. We must confine ourselves to a brief conspectus. And first as to his parochial labors and successes in Kaskaskia.

At the time of Father Gibault's arrival in Kaskaskia the old town had become rejuvenated though not in the spirit of religion. It contained a population of over fifteen hundred souls, almost all Catholics of some sort. The women were still true to the Church of their childhood, and faithful to the marriage bond. But the love of pleasure and gayety had made sad inroads upon their religious fervor. The old patriarchal life had given place to fashion and folly. As for the men, Father

---

<sup>6</sup> "Life of Pope Clement XIV," from the French of M. Caraecioli, London, 1776, Appendix, pp. 35-84. Also, "American Catholic Quarterly Review," XII, 699.

<sup>7</sup> Carayon, *op. cit.* p. 97. Metzger, vol. IV, p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> Carayon, *ibidem*.

<sup>9</sup> Letter of May 23, 1776. Metzger, p. 55.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Thompson, Jos., "Illinois' First Citizen Pierre Gibault," in "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vols. IV, V, VIII.

Gibault could not find ten who had made their Easter duty for the last four or five years. Father Meurin's teachings had found but stony ground in frivolous Kaskaskia. But the young missionary from Canada started a vigorous attack upon ignorance and vice. In his letter to Bishop Briand, February 15, 1769, he writes: "I have public prayers every evening towards sundown, catechism four times a week, three times for the whites, and once for the blacks or slaves. As often as possible I preach on such matters as I think most useful for the instruction of my hearers. In a word, I employ my talents for the glory of God, for my own sanctification and for that of my neighbor as much, it seems to me, as I ought to do. I trust that our Lord will consider more what I wish to do and the intention with which I do it, than what I accomplish."<sup>11</sup>

On June 15th, of the same year the young pastor had the satisfaction of being able to write . . . . "There are only seven or eight persons in my village who did not receive their Paschal Communion, something that, according to the oldest inhabitant had never been known before . . . . My tithes amount to from two to three hundred bushels of wheat and four or five hundred bushels of maize or Indian corn, and perquisites."<sup>12</sup> But this was only a beginning although an excellent one: he had gained the good will and the confidence of his parishioners composed of French Creoles, Canadians, the Indians of the Mission and the soldiers of a batallion of the Eighteenth Royal Irish Regiment.<sup>13</sup>

Concerning Ste. Genevieve, the appointed residence of Father Meurin, Father Gibault writes soon after his arrival in the Illinois country: "I have always attended Ste. Genevieve, which is two leagues from my parish, on the other side of the Mississippi, and which, consequently, belongs to the Spaniards. I easily secured the permission to do so from the English governor; and the Spanish Commandant, being very devout, would wish me to have it forever, etc. Father Meurin has no permission to go there. The comprehensive title of Vicar General made them banish him from Ste. Genevieve, where he would have stayed as a simple missionary; but a Jesuit with so much power in Spain became an object of suspicion. I do not cross over to the other side except for marriages and baptisms and to attend the sick."<sup>14</sup>

After restoring order, harmony and spiritual life in all the missions in the vicinity of his residence at Kaskaskia, Father Gibault extended his labors to more distant fields. In the winter of 1769-70 he set out for Vincennes, although the route he must travel was through a

<sup>11</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 200.

<sup>12</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 201.

<sup>13</sup> The Royal Irish Regiment was stationed at Fort Chartres.

<sup>14</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 199.

country filled with hostile and savage Indians on the war path, who had already killed many people. Similar conditions obtained at this Post, as he had found at Kaskaskia. Twenty years of deprivation of religious ministration had introduced libertinage and irreligion. "Nevertheless," as the missionary says, "when he arrived everybody came in a crowd to meet him on the banks of the Wabash. Some threw themselves upon their knees and were quite unable to speak; others spoke only by their sobs; some cried out, 'Father, save us, we are nearly in hell'; others said: 'God has not utterly abandoned us, for it is He who has sent you to us to make us do penance for our sins'; and others again exclaimed: 'Ah, Sir, why did you not come a month ago, then my poor wife, my dear father, my loved mother, my poor child would not have died without the sacraments.'"<sup>15</sup> Father Gibault was deeply touched by these manifestations of good will. Of his successes during the two months of his stay he made mention to his Bishop: "I have rebuilt the church at this post. It will be of wood but well built and very strong; there are a goodly sized presbytery, a fine orchard, a garden and a good farm (terre) for the benefit of the pastor who would live elegantly. There are only eighty inhabitants who farm, but there are many people of all trades, numbers of young men who are daily establishing themselves here; in all there are about seven or eight hundred persons who are desirous of having a priest."<sup>16</sup> To make his joy complete an English family at the Post, all of whose members were Presbyterians, asked to be received into the Church. During Father Gibault's absence from Kaskaskia Father Meurin was kept busy as he informs the Bishop with all the missions, as far as Cahokia, his own residence being in Prairie du Rocher. Sometime after Father Gibault's return from Vincennes his mother came to Kaskaskia to make a home for her son, and his domestic happiness took away from his mission the character of a place of exile. The sister who accompanied her to the Illinois country had not been there long before she was married. Both had remained behind for a time at Mackinac until a home was prepared for them at Kaskaskia. In allusion to Bishop Briand's reproach, the truehearted son wrote: "I could not send away my dear mother who came to me at Montreal saying that she would go to the ends of the earth (with me) rather than be left in her old age at the mercy of any and everybody."<sup>17</sup> In regard to Father Meurin he says: "I consider myself nearly alone, for the Reverend Father Meurin has been unable to leave his house since last autumn, partly because of his age which has broken him down, partly because of several dangerous falls that he had on bad roads to which the weight

---

<sup>15</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 202-203.

<sup>16</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 203.

<sup>17</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 203.

of his body and the weakness of his limbs made him liable." Two more missionaries are still needed, one for the Tamarois, twenty leagues from here; the other for Post Vincennes, eighty leagues from here. Disorders are many there . . . . This portion of your flock is terribly exposed to wolves, especially at Post Vincennes where there is a considerable number of people who are much better able to support a priest than at the place where I am. And yet I find myself very happily fixed as to temporal affairs."<sup>18</sup>

The missionary on the spot is getting importunate: the bishop far away does not respond. So the life of weariness and fret must go on. Father Gibault bears his cross bravely, without repining. The Registers of Michilimackinac, of the Sault of St. Mary, St. Joseph's on Lake Michigan, Detroit, Cahokia, St. Louis, St. Genevieve, Kaskaskia, Vincennes and Peoria, show how vast an extent of territory he traversed during his missionary career; and his letters furnish us with interesting details regarding his ministry.

Mostly he went about from place to place on foot or horseback or in a cart, bearing with him the utensils of his sacred ministry; sometimes a canoe was provided by a friend or chance companion of a voyage. At first he carried a belt with pistol and knife, as a protection against wild animals or a warning to marauders. But later he discarded the pistol as being more dangerous to himself than to any possible enemy. Facing danger at almost every step, braving hardships such as are unknown today in all but the most savage countries, bearing his burden alone with God, ever ready for the call of duty, Father Gibault was also doomed to taste the bitterness of obloquy and defamation. It seems to be the fate of all the great and good. But how nobly, how convincingly does Father Gibault repel the impudent accusation in a letter to his Bishop: "How can I, in all the pains and hardships I have undergone in my different journeys, winter and summer, to points the most separated, attending so many villages, so distant from each other, in all weathers, night and day, snow or rain, windstorm or fog on the Mississippi, so that I never slept four nights in a year in my own bed, never hesitating to start at a moment's notice, whether sick or well; how, I ask, can a priest who sacrifices himself in this way with no other view than God's glory, and the salvation of his neighbor, with no pecuniary reward, almost always ill-fed, unable almost to attend to both spiritual and temporal; how I again ask, can you know that such a priest, zealous to fulfill the duties of his holy ministry, careful to watch over his flock, to found them in the most important tenets of religion, to instruct the young unceasingly and untiringly, not only in

---

<sup>18</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 202.

Christian doctrine but in reading and writing; how can you know that he is one who gives or has given scandal to his people.”<sup>19</sup>

Father Gibault visited Canada in 1775. On his way he made a second visit to Vincennes. Returning in September he was detained at Mackinac by bad weather until the third of December. After retracing his course to Detroit, he wrote the Bishop: “The suffering I have undergone between Michilimackinac and this place has so deadened my faculties that I only half feel my chagrin at being unable to proceed to the Illinois.”<sup>20</sup> Yet he did return, but how early in the year we do not know. Only this we know that his missionary life was continued with all the energy of his soul.

On February 23, 1777 his companion in the vast mission, Father Sebastian Louis Meurin, Indian Missionary, Vicar General and Pastor of St. Joseph Church, Prairie du Rocher, entered into life eternal. On February 27 or 29 Father Gibault buried his remains in the Church on the gospel side of the altar, from which they were removed in August 1849 to the beautiful Cemetery of St. Stanislaus Novitiate, Florissant, Missouri.<sup>21</sup>

Father Gibault was now left alone the only priest in the wide domain of the Illinois.

---

<sup>19</sup> “Historical Records and Studies,” vol. VI, Part II, p. 153.

<sup>20</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 208.

<sup>21</sup> Records of St. Joseph's Parish of Prairie du Rocher.

## FATHER GIBAULT, THE PATRIOT PRIEST.

After life's fitful fever Father Meurin now rests in peace: but for Father Gibault the stormiest years of his eventful career are drawing nigh. The Declaration of Independence, July 4th, 1776, had electrified the English Colonies on the Atlantic seaboard. War was sweeping the country to the East and North. Canada was held safe for the British by French Catholics with Bishop Briands' powerful influence. "It was Bishop Briand," as his successor tells us in glowing terms, "who, occupying the Sea of Quebec at the turning point in the history of France, living alternately under the banner of the Fleur de Lis and again under the British standard, loyal at first to the former until, when on the Plains of Abraham, all, save honor, was lost, generously transferred to the latter the homage of his entire loyalty, used all his sacred influence during those terrible days to keep Canada faithful to her new masters. And the people of Canada with few exceptions, whilst still preserving affection for their old mother-country, were happy to live in the shadow of the British flag and to know that they dwelt in one of the freest countries of the world."<sup>1</sup>

When, however, France came to the aid of the struggling Americans, this sentiment of loyalty became clouded with new hopes and fears, especially in the old French possessions on the Mississippi.

Rumors of battles and sieges and massacres came floating on the air in the spring and early summer of 1778. The Illinois country, indeed, felt safe from attack. The garrison of the little stone fort in Kaskaskia had been almost completely withdrawn to fight the rebels and Indians around Detroit. A Frenchman, Rocheblave, was commandant of the place. He had a presentiment of something serious impending, but no one paid any attention to his warnings. His business was to direct the neighboring Indians against the American frontier settlements of Kentucky and Georgia. "The principal inhabitants were entirely against the American cause," neither were they prepared to fight for the British. They desired only the preservation of peace. The Commandant, a bumptious personage imported from St. Genevieve, was scoffed at when making the remotest allusion to an impending attack. All was quiet along the Okaw River, when on a sudden, in the depth of night, the eagles of war swooped down on Kaskaskia's peaceful cit-

---

<sup>1</sup> "American Catholic Historical Researches," vol. XVII, pp. 142 and 143.

izens. It was George Rogers Clark with his little band of so-called Virginians, daring fellows from the frontier settlements of Kentucky. The Governor of Virginia, Patrick Henry, had authorized the attack. The intrepid yet most prudent Clark had carried out his own well considered plan. Kaskaskia was in the power of the Virginians, but the legend might have been reversed to say: The Virginians are in the power of Kaskaskia. Quick action must follow the surprise. Rocheblave is a prisoner of war. But the citizens of the town, and the neighboring Indians, far surpass the number of Clark's volunteers. Then Cahokia too must be captured or won over, but that is a question for tomorrow. The situation requires immediate action. The unexpected coming of Clark's Long Knives had only disturbed and not roused the Kaskaskians to resistance. They ask permission to assemble in the Church for divine service, and a discussion of their present plight. Clark speaks kindly to them, seeing their fear and bewilderment; for there are few things more bewildering than the surprise of an attack at night. Sagacious, as Clark is, he talks to them about the advantage of joining the American cause, and assures them that the Americans are not the wild and beastly fellows, they had been represented to be. They listened in silence. At the general meeting Father Gibault who had been to see Clark, dispelled their anxieties, assuring them of the friendship and protection of the Americans. The temper of the Kaskaskias was now changed from fear to joy, as not only their lives, but their liberty and prosperity seemed secure. From that day on Father Gibault was regarded as a tower of strength for Clark's boldest plans, and the brave priest fully realized the commander's expectations.<sup>2</sup>

The next important step to be taken by the Americans was the capture of Cahokia. Owing to Father Gibault's assurances, this was easily accomplished by Clark's lieutenant Joseph Bowman. Of course, a wave of alarm and consternation swept on through the country as Bowman's cavalry troop rode into the various villages on their way to Cahokia: But Father Gibault's word reassured the people, and all was calm and quiet once more. An alleged attempt to raise the Indians at Cahokia against the invaders must have proved futile. Within ten days practically all the inhabitants of the French villages from Kaskaskia to Cahokia had taken the oath of allegiance to the sovereign state of Virginia. There is nothing said here about Fort Chartres, which a few years previous was called "the most convenient and best built fort in North America," for the simple reason that the currents of the Mississippi river had succeeded to such an extent in their work of undermining its massive walls,

---

2 Cf. "Conquest of the Country Northwest of the River Ohio, 1778-1783," by William Hayden English, 1896. Chapter VII.

that this, the proudest monument of the power of France in America was then only a crumbling ruin.

Col. Clark was, of course, fully convinced that the British would try to cut off his communications with Virginia. In order to do this Vincennes on the Wabash, would be their first objective. In order to secure his hold on the Illinois towns, he must capture Vincennes. He learnt from Father Gibault, that the British Governor had with-drawn the garrison from the fort, yet the inhabitants of the town might easily thwart the effort at capture. Father Gibault counselled peaceable means of conquest. He offered to go to Vincennes himself to persuade his parishioners there to deliver town and village to the Virginians. But as his duties were spiritual, he asked that Dr. Laffont, a citizen of Kaskaskia, be appointed as head of the mission. Father Gibault, however, promised Clark, "that he would give the people of Vincennes such hints in the spiritual way that would be conducive to the business." The offer and suggestion was gladly accepted by Clark. Father Gibault received his instruction verbally: Dr. Laffont was appointed head of the delegation, but its soul was Father Gibault. Dr. Laffont was ordered by Clark to act in concert with him, "the priest, who will prepare the inhabitants to agree to your demands." The two heralds of peace started at once for Vincennes and were respectfully received at the town. Father Gibault, being the pastor of the place, knew everybody and was loved by all. When he opened to them the purpose of his mission, they were surprised: but as he explained to them, what had been done at Kaskaskia, and that there was nothing else to be done at Vincennes under the circumstances in which the French people found themselves between two warring powers, they acquiesced to acknowledge their submission, and took the oath of allegiance to Virginia. The boundaries of the Great Republic was thus extended to the Mississippi on the west and to the Illinois River to the north.<sup>3</sup>

Col. Clark wrote two accounts of the whole transaction, the second one slightly differing from the first. In the first version Clark claims the credit of originating the plan for himself, in the second document greater prominence is given to the priest. However that may be, Father Gibault was in reality the originator and main actor in the winning of Vincennes for the Americans. Clark's statement is that Father Gibault offered to go to Vincennes, and went as an emissary of Virginia. The British authorities condemned the priest for his interference by which Vincennes was lost to their cause. The Bishop of Quebec, Briand and his successor, were displeased with their former Vicar General for turning the people of the Illinois County to the American side. The

---

<sup>3</sup> Alvord, C. W., "Kaskaskia Records," p. XXVII s.

testimony in favor of Father Gibault's decisive influence on the extension of American power north of the Ohio River is so general and convincing, that Judge Law's dictum is accepted by all who are interested in the matter: "To Father Gibault, next to Clark and Vigo, the United States are more indebted for the accession of the States comprised in what was the original Northwest Territory, than to any other man."<sup>4</sup>

It is true, that the British reconquered Vincennes, and proposed the reconquest of the Illinois villages at their earliest convenience. But, thanks to the fidelity of the French habitants, and the salutary respect for the power of America, instilled into the Indians by the adhesion of their old friends, the French, to the American cause, Col. Clark held his position in the Illinois country and regained the control of Vincennes. Clark's second capture of the strategic point on the Wabash was affected by French militia from the Mississippi border, under French and American officers, all of which would have been impossible if Father Gibault had not exerted his influence on the people of his love and care. Yet, as the Historian of "The Illinois Country" tells us: "In spite of the success of the expedition, Father Gibault was unwilling to be counted an actor in it, for having learned of the village gossip about his influence in Vincennes, he persuaded Dr. Laffont to write, a few days after his return, a letter to Clark, in which Laffont assumed all responsibility. In less than a month after he started for Vincennes, therefore, he was saying that he had done nothing more than counsel "peace and union and to hinder bloodshed."<sup>5</sup> From this seeming contradiction it would appear to follow, either that Father Gibault's character of courage and veracity must suffer, or that the high claims made for his name and fame as one of the great heroes of the western world must be considerably reduced. Now neither point of this dilemma can be justly urged. There is another possibility, a possibility that is often disregarded. What if Father Gibault, with all his greatness and with all his grand achievements as recorded in history, was essentially a modest, humble man, "After crosses and losses men grow humbler and wiser," is a saying of Benjamin Franklin. It is a true saying. And again; "humility is the solid foundation of all the virtues." Few men of his time have had greater losses and crosses than Father Gibault, few men among his contemporaries have attained a higher degree of virtue. Crosses laid the foundation of humility, and on humility was built the noble character of Father Gibault. The valiant Pastor of Kaskaskia could make every sacrifice for the people of his flock, without any regard to possible praise or blame, did he but perform what he recognized

<sup>4</sup> Law, Judge John, "Colonial History of Vincennes," (1858), p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> Alvord, C. W., "Kaskaskia Records," pp. 50-51.

as his duty. The success of his undertakings was not the effect of his work, but of the blessing of God. Let God be praised for all, and, if a few little fragments of praise are due to the human instruments of divine power, let them go to those who need a little praise in order to keep up their courage and good will. Father Gibault was no common man: his character was cast in a heroic mold. His was not a "timid soul," as Clark was pleased to describe it. The stoutest heart of a father might well quake at the sight of the sword flashing above the head of his children. Father Gibault was a true father of his people of Kaskaskia. And in regard to serious danger to himself, the brave man will seek to avoid it, as long as duty and honor permits: only the rash and presumptuous rush into danger where they have no call. If Clark then thought he saw a certain trepidation in Father Gibault at the approach of the British, where Clark's followers remained cool and collected; he should have thought of the difference between the French and Anglo-Saxon temperaments, the one warm and demonstrative, the other cool and contemptuous.

But did not Father Gibault violate his oath of allegiance to the English King, and advise his people to do likewise? Do not the words addressed by the Canadian Bishop contain a reflection on Father Gibault's conduct at Kaskaskia and Vincennes: "Our good friends seem at times to forget the duty of loyalty for the children of Christ's Church. It is not a sentimental affair nor of personal interest; it is a stern and serious duty of conscience, flowing from a principle sacred, immutable, eternal, as the Divine Legislator. Let them not be uneasy, then, on the attitude of the Catholic clergy in such an affair. The past has been unassailable; the future will be, because our Catholic principles do not change."<sup>6</sup> Was there not a very noticeable change in the principle of loyalty as interpreted by Father Gibault's word and practice? We feel justified in saying, "no." Here is the proof: Clark's invasion of British territory was one of the lawful phases of our Revolutionary war. If one was lawful the other was lawful, too. Obedience to the powers that be, is the duty of the Christian. And even the law of nations cannot but sanction the practice of renouncing one's allegiance to one sovereign and transferring it by oath to another, provided there be a just cause.

If only Colonel Clark had been less addicted to self glorification, he would have better interpreted the spirit of Father Gibault. Not that he failed to do full justice to the priest in general, but that he, at times, cast a slur upon his friend and helper in need, not so much to set lower the priest's name and fame, but rather to exalt his own. Here is a

---

<sup>6</sup> "American Catholic Historical Researches," vol. XVII, p. 144.

case in point: I give the event in the words of a most competent judge: "It was while matters looked most gloomy that Clark, fearing disaster, sent Father Gibault with his official papers and money across the Mississippi, in the dead of winter, in January 1779, to place them in safety on the Spanish side of the Mississippi. To show his friendship for the American commander, the Curé, attended by one man only, undertook the mission. For three days he was detained by the floating ice on an island in the Mississippi, but at last successfully carried out his mission."<sup>7</sup> Now what does the doughty warrior make of this? Clark gives a vivid account of the ball at Prairie du Rocher, and the subsequent panic at the report of Hamilton's approach with eight hundred men. Then he describes his own inimitable self-possession, dancing on as if oblivious of his danger. Then, casting a compassionate glance at poor trembling Father Gibault, who probably was not trembling at all, the well-poised warrior pretended to his "timid friend," that he wanted him "to go to the Spanish side with public papers and money." It cannot be supposed that a man in his senses would send some one giving signs of consternation, on such an important mission. Col. Clark apparently takes no account of moral courage, that sees the danger, yet braves and overcomes it, as Father Gibault certainly did in attempting the dangerous crossing. This failure of Clark's judgment makes us very doubtful as to Father Gibault's alleged consternation on this occasion.

Now, as Father Gibault realized that the Illinois Country was lost to the English, he made use of his privilege to submit to the rule of the actual masters, the United States, and to insinuate to his people the moral right of so doing, whilst refraining from counselling the act. Even oath-bound obligations cease, when the possibility of fulfilling them ceases, which was the case with Father Gibault and the French of the Illinois.

In fact necessity as well as common prudence sufficiently counselled these people to accept the boon of liberty from those who had won it for them, the Virginians of Clark. A refusal of Clark's generous proposals meant bloodshed, rankling hatred and possible extinction. Under such conditions any just ruler would have readily absolved his subjects from their sworn allegiance to him. The British King could not have made an exception here. What Gibault really did was not to absolve his people from their oath, but only to explain to them the Church's position on this point of morality which in itself was a spiritual matter, within his competence as a priest. Hence Father Gibault could truthfully say in his request to Dr. Laffont "that in all civil af-

---

7 Herberman, in "Historical Records and Studies," vol. VII, Part II, p. 132.

fairs, not only with the French but with the savages, he meddled with nothing, because he was not ordered to do so, and it was opposed to his priestly vocation; and that Laffont alone had the direction of the affairs, he having confined himself toward both (nations) solely to exhortation tending toward peace and union and to the prevention of bloodshed.”<sup>8</sup>

In the history of the Church the capture of Kaskaskia and Vincennes by George Rogers Clark is but an incident, an incident, however of far-reaching influence and importance. Such an incident it was also in the life of Father Gibault. The great missionary is often proudly extolled as “The Patriot Priest of America,” comparable possibly to Father Hidalgo, of Mexican fame. “The Patriot Priest of America,” meaning the United States, he certainly was not. Father Gibault was never an American in that sense. He was a Canadian by birth and education, a British subject by necessity, and, if you will, an American rebel during the war of revolution, whom the British would certainly have hanged if he had fallen into their hands. The fight between England and her colonies was not his fight, though the outcome may have interested him, in as far as he knew that France was assisting the colonies with ships and armies and gold. This very fact may have kindled once more the lingering hope, that France should come into its own at last. But if Canada was doomed to remain subject, either to the imperial power of the British, or the republican power of the Americans, his interest in the one and in the other was gone.

So much for Father Gibault's politics. Above all things Father Gibault was a missionary priest bent on saving souls and ever ready to protect his people against the powers of evil, high or low, whether they dwelt under the British flag or the banner of Spain. Political views did not count here. Pecuniary advantages were of no consequence. He was first and foremost and always the representative of the Catholic Church, the true Kingdom of God.

This fact does not in the least derogate from the true greatness of the man. For a great man, brave and strong and wise, Father Gibault certainly was. He displayed heroic courage in many a dangerous situation; he never lost his presence of mind, even when the specter of death blocked his path-way unannounced; he used admirable prudence, when a word, a suspicious movement might have ruined him and his people. He was one of the most generous of men, and his friendships were lasting and sincere. Above all he bore the mark of true greatness; he never despaired, no matter how dark and threatening the future might look. He was a man of high ideals; his supreme achievement was to

---

<sup>8</sup> Alvord, “Kaskaskia Records,” p. 50.

save what was left of religion and tide it over to a bright future he knew would come.

That this acknowledged greatness of the man accomplished a great advancement for America in Clark's campaign against the British in the Illinois country, is undeniable. But here he certainly builded better than he knew. Even Clark did not fully realize the importance of the capture. It was only through the victory of Yorktown that Clark's memorable victories attained their real importance. How far the latter contributed to the general result is hard to say. Certain it is that the decision came in the East. We, however, behold the capture of the Old French towns and the conquest of the Illinois country in a reflected glory—Heroic as they were, that mission to Vincennes through hostile bands of Indian warriors, and through the bloodless capture of the fort and town, deserves the highest admiration and praise. In this memorable deed of war for the sake of peace, Father Gibault looms up as the greater, because the gentler and more humane of the two victors. It was Father Gibault that counselled persuasion, where Clark would have been forced to use the gun and sword. By Clark's method the innocent would have suffered with the enemy; by Gibault's prudence and persuasiveness the enemy profited with the innocent habitants of the town. The final result would have been the same under the one as well as under the other plan; only the wounds of sorrow and anger and hate would have been opened afresh, and made a reconciliation of the French and the Anglo-Saxon almost hopeless. Father Gibault's course was misunderstood or misrepresented by many of his friends and enemies. His own Bishop disavowed his act of supporting the American cause, and denied him the privilege of returning to Canada, where the venerable priest wished to spend his declining years. Yet, even his enemies had to acknowledge his right and duty to obey the powers that be; Gibault was not an English subject except by force. He regarded the British as intruders just as much as the Virginians under Clark. Between the two contending factions the only law was "*salus populi*," the good of his people. And the salvation of his people clearly lay on the side of Clark and his Virginians.

## CHAPTER 6

### ST. LOUIS AS A CANONICAL PARISH

Laclede's Village, as St. Louis was usually called by the early hunters and rivermen, had grown into a town of marked beauty, size and importance. Stretching along the river front it rose in three tiers of buildings, under the shelter of a ridge of considerable height that formed the western boundary of the settlement. The three streets running parallel to the river bore the names: Rue Royale, Rue De L'église, Rue des Granges. The heart of the town was enclosed by the Rue Royale and Rue des Granges running north to south, and Rue de la Tour (Walnut) and Rue Bonhomme (Market) crossing them from west to east formed two squares, the Church block and Laclede's trading house and dwelling. There were nine streets on each side of the Church block, most of them named for trees, as Chestnut, Pine, Olive, etc. At that time St. Louis was without fortifications of any kind. Being built on an elevated plateau, the approach from the river was by a steep incline from the foot of the Rue Bonhomme (now Market St.). In 1764 the town numbered one hundred and fifteen houses, fifteen being of stone, the others of logs placed in an upright position, the interstices filled in with mortar or clay. The population was a colorful mixture of hunters and trappers, merchants and voyagers, French and Spanish soldiers, who had now settled down for life. Then there were Canadian and Creole farmers from Fort Chartres, St. Phillip, from Kaskaskia and Prairie de Rocher, and especially from Cahokia, just beyond the river. All were of the Catholic faith, not too learned in ecclesiastical lore, but honest, upright and contented people. Some of the late comers were men of distinction and culture, even members of the *haute noblesse* of the French court. The town enjoyed two inexhaustible sources of wealth: first, the trade with the Indians along the Missouri and the upper reaches of the Mississippi, and second, the rich soil of the prairies put under cultivation.

Every French village in the Illinois country had Commonfields and a Commons.<sup>1</sup> The first designation was applied to the lands that were assigned to the various inhabitants, all fronting on the borders of the village and running in a narrow strip of an acre, more or less, to a depth of say forty or fifty or more acres. Thus each tiller of the soil had access to his land from his house and barn in the village. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Breese, "Early History of Illinois," p. 173. Also, Billon, "Annals of St. Louis," French and Spanish, 21 and 22 and 91.



### THE SPANISH CHURCH

(Called Church of the Palisades)

Erected while St. Louis was under Spanish Government. Dedicated in Summer of 1776. Served as Cathedral for Bishop Du Bourg until new building was erected.



first commonfields of St. Louis were situated on the prairie stretching from the end of Rue Bonhomme (Market St.) to the Great Mound in the north, the land lying southwest of the village, being well watered and covered with timber, was set aside for a Commons in which the cattle and other stock of the habitants were kept for safety and convenience. These two tracts were fenced in by the people in 1764, the eastern fence forming the western boundary of the village.

The tillers of the soil living in the village of St. Louis were not as numerous or not as industrious as the progress of its business seemed to require: for this reason the nickname *Pain Courte* was attached to it in an unofficial way, a name that is sometimes found even in public documents. The *Annalist of St. Louis*<sup>2</sup> goes so far as to state that the village was named St. Louis a long time after its foundation. Yet this is palpably false and Billon's argumentation in support of his contention is equally unsubstantial. For the name *San Luis* is used in the Report on "Ulloa's Instructions to erect Forts at the mouth of the Missouri," October 2nd, 1767, only two and one half years after the founding of village. The Frenchmen were not aware at first that western Louisiana had been placed under Spanish rule; in fact many of them had come to settle on the western border of the river from a great desire to live and die under the lily-banner of France.

King Louis XV, though in reality one of the most contemptible monarchs, was known to the colonists more as one surrounded by a blaze of glory, than as the moral weakling he really was. Besides this, he was the outward representation of their own country and nation, La Belle France. In naming St. Louis in honor of the King then holding sway, Laclède chose as the future city's patron and protector the bright spotless Crusader King, St. Louis IX. We have the best of authority on this matter and the testimony of August Chouteau, the main actor in the event after Laclède: "Laclède, on his arrival, named the town St. Louis, in honor of the King of France."<sup>3</sup>

Now in May 1776 this little political unit of French Catholics under Spanish rule received its spiritual complement in being raised to the dignity of a Canonical parish, the first one in all Upper Louisiana, except St. Genevieve. The man who was named as its first pastor was a German by birth and education, a Capuchin Monk, whose title was "P. F. Bernard de Limpach, O. M. Cap. Curé de Paroisse St. Louis

---

<sup>2</sup> Billon, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Both St. Louis IX and Louis XV were Kings of France. As in Baptism, the name of the godfather's patron saint is given to the child, in order to honor the godfather as well as his patron saint, so Laclède imposed the name of St. Louis, "the good King St. Louis," on his village in honor of King Louis XV, the reigning sovereign. Whether Louis XV deserved the honor or not is not to the point.

des Illinois.”<sup>4</sup> Arriving in St. Louis on May 25th, 1776, he presented his credentials to the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Louisiana, Don Francisco Cruzat. A few weeks previous the Capuchin Father Hilaire de Genevaux, Pastor of St. Genevieve since November 1773, had visited St. Louis and brought the information that Father Bernard was on his way, and, at the same time, baptized six whites and solemnized one marriage.

As the appointment and installation of Father Bernard de Limpach as Canonical Pastor of St. Louis are matters of deep interest to a wide circle of American Catholics, we would here record them in an English translation from the French and Spanish originals, as preserved in the Spanish Archives. Both official acts throw a number of welcome side lights on the condition of ecclesiastical affairs at that far off time: The Letter of Appointment reads: “Being well and sufficiently advised of your good morals and capacity, wishing besides, to conform ourselves in all things to the orders of his most Christian Majesty who has directed us by his letters patent, registered in the records of the Superior Council of this colony, to issue in good and due form titles and commissions as curates to our missionaries who have been attending to the parishes and posts of which the mission has heretofore been in charge, merely by way of performing the functions of the Curé, and to put them in legal possession of the same; the collation, provision and all other disposition being reserved to us in our quality of Superior until such time as his Christian Majesty may otherwise order; we have heretofore given and conferred and to give and confer to you by these presents the Curé of the parochial church of St. Louis of the Illinois, post of Paincourt, with all its rights and dependencies whatsoever, upon the charge of actual and personal residence there and not otherwise, until a change or revocation shall be made by ourselves or our successors. We therefore require the ministers of the substitute of the King’s representative to see that you be put in real and actual possession of said Curé or parish of St. Louis of the Illinois, as is of usage in observing the ordinary solemnities.

Given at our Curial Mansion, under our official seal, the eighteenth day of February of the year of Grace one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six.

(signed)

F. Dagobert.

Grand Vicar.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> The Father’s name was spelled de Limpach, not de Limbach, as public documents show. The P. F. means Professus Frater, a professed Friar.

<sup>5</sup> Reprinted in Scharf, “History of St. Louis,” p. 1639.

No time was lost in the installation of the new priest in his Curé, for on the very day that the Lieutenant Governor certified to his credentials, a meeting of the inhabitants was called, and these proceedings were had: "In the town of St. Louis, at nine o'clock of the morning of Sunday, the nineteenth day of the month of May, in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six, before me, Don Francisco Cruzat, Captain of Infantry and Lieutenant Governor of these settlements of the Illinois, and the most distinguished parishioners of the parish of said town, all assembled together in the church; the Reverend P. Friar Bernardo de Limpach, Capuchin priest, in virtue of the dispatch which he had brought and delivered from the Most Reverend Father Dagobert de Longwy, Capuchin Priest, Superior and Vicar General of the Mission of this Province of Louisiana, bearing date the eighteenth of February last passed, and the letter of direction which I, the said Lieutenant Governor, have received from the Senor Don Luis de Unzaga y Ameraga, Brigadier of the royal armies and Governor General of this Province, bearing date the twenty-eight of February of the current year, in which he commands me to recognize the above named P. Friar Bernardo de Limpach as the curate of the said town of St. Louis; after having performed all the ceremonies that are usual and prescribed by his said Superior, the Most Reverend Father Dagobert, he has entered into and taken legal and formal possession of the Curé of this parish of St. Louis of the Illinois; and I, the said Lieutenant Governor, have caused him to be recognized publicly, as he is recognized, by all the parishioners of the said parish and in order that the same may more fully appear and that no obstacle may, at any time hereafter, be interposed to the exercise of his ministry, there shall be deposited in the archives of this government under my charge, the copy of this dispatch together with this act, which the said P. Friar Bernardo de Limpach has signed with me, the said Lieutenant Governor, and the most distinguished persons of this town, who by my command were assembled for this purpose, the same day, month and year above mentioned. P. F. Bernard; Perrault; Du Breuil; Benito Basques; Hubert; Sarpy; Laeclède-Liguest; A. Bernard; Erne Barre; Labuxiere; Chauvin; Conde; Jh. Conand; Francó Cruzat."<sup>26</sup>

After this rather formal transaction Highmass was sung by Father Bernard, at which the little dilapidated church was filled to overflowing. Thus began the happy, though not uneventful, period of the good Capuchin's spiritual regime of twelve long years. The letter of Father Bernard's Superior and Vicar General is worthy of special study on account of the sidelights it throws upon the Church history of that early

---

• Scharf, *op. cit.*, p. 1640.

day. First, as to Father Dagobert's jurisdiction, it becomes plain that the authorities in New Orleans are not quite convinced of the Spanish claims. Father Cyrillo de Bacerlona as representative of the Bishop of Santiago de Cuba, James Joseph Echevaria, is really the supreme authority in Louisiana, but he permits the old French Vicar General of Quebec to continue in office and make the appointments. Why? Because, the Superior of the Capuchin's still held the power given to him by the Bishop of Quebec, the Vicar Generalship, that was still the only valid one at least in spiritual matters, and therefore, his jurisdiction was certainly valid; whilst the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Santiago de Cuba, and of Father Cyrillo was to say the least, very doubtful. The Spanish jurisdiction was finally established by Rome in 1777, the year after Father Bernard's appointment.

Father Cyrillo de Barcelona brought along from Cuba a band of seven Spanish Capuchins among them the new Pastor of St. Louis. Though his name is not mentioned his personality is but slightly hidden under the designation Padre Aleman, the German Father, as Father Bernard was a native of one of the German principalities on the Rhine and very probable born in the town of Limpach in Luxemburg. The unmeaning phrase, "de dix par" appearing in the original document would indicate his place of birth, but must have been muddled by the transcriber. It may stand for "de Limpach" or for "de deux ponts," which would designate the city of Zweibruecken, as the Father's place of birth. The word "letters patent" signifies a royal decree on a single sheet of parchment, not folded but open (patent) with a heavy seal attached at the bottom. The letters patent were issued as Father Dagobert says, by His Most Christian Majesty, that is, the King of France; and he claims that they are in force, until His Catholic Majesty, that is the King of Spain, shall revoke them. This circumstance would prove that the Spanish ecclesiastical authorities in New Orleans still considered themselves as holding from Quebec.

The use of "Paincourt" as a second name for St. Louis, seems rather strange in a public document. Don Francisco Cruzat ignores it in his report on the subsequent proceedings. No doubt, at that time the nickname "Paincourt" was used more frequently than the city's proper designation, St. Louis. And what a poor little establishment this Parish of St. Louis was in regard to living conditions and the Church services. The Church built of logs, and the Parish residence were equally dilapidated. The presbytere was a mere shell and empty at that. The Church had a tower in form of a St. Andrews Cross, and a little bell rang out the angelus, morning, noon, and nightfall. The necessary utensils for divine service were there, even a Monstrance for Benediction and the Corpus Christi procession. A complete inventory of these

things was handed to Father Bernard, and he attested its correctness. But the priest's dwelling, the presbytere, nobody could live in that. The people's heart went out to their good Father in true Catholic loyalty. They determined to build a new presbytere. On September 1st, 1776, after the Highmass, the entire parish assembled in the vacant parlor of the old residence with the Lieutenant Governor Cruzat as presiding officer, to deliberate on the plan of a new parish-house. It was decided to build it of stone, 45x27 feet, front and depth, and two stories high. The work was to begin in the coming Spring, and to continue until all was completed. In order to animate the good people in their generous resolution, Father Bernard obliged himself to contribute the sum of four hundred and thirty-seven livres in peltry. Hard cash was very scarce, paper-money was tabooed since the failure of John Law's flood of paper money; hence the use of peltry, deer-skins and lead as the currency of the land. A livre was about twenty cents of our money. But Father Bernard did not have the money nor the peltry. All his savings had been spent for the journey of ninety days up the river. The Parish, however, had agreed to reimburse the priest for this heavy outlay in their cause. So Father Bernard turned the parishioners' promise to pay into the building fund of the Parish, and all were satisfied. But the parishioners too, had to lay hands on their supplies of shaved deer-skin, each one according to his financial ability. As appraisers and superintendents they chose Jean Cambas and Jean Orteze. The assessment was made in form of a per capita tax; every inhabitant over the age of fourteen was laid under contribution. Whatever materials of the old structure were serviceable, should be used on the building. The bids for labor and material were opened on June 29th, 1777. Benito Basques was the successful bidder for the stone-work at fourteen hundred livres in peltry; the carpenter work was assigned to Francois Delaise, at five hundred and fifty livres; a certain Mr. Vardon undertook the building of the roof for two hundred and ninety-nine livres suspecting, probably that his competitor would bid for the round sum of three hundred.<sup>7</sup>

We devoted somewhat more space to the building operations, than our readers may think proper. Yet, we surmise even here, that this solid stone parish-house will eventually serve as the palace of His Grace, Bishop Louis William Valentine Du Bourg, in 1818. Old illustrations show it on the south side of the porch-girt Church, on the Rue de L'eglise, now Second Street, between Market and Walnut. The cemetery occupied the north side of the Church block between Rue de

---

<sup>7</sup> Wilson Primm's "History of the Catholic Church in St. Louis," read before Missouri's Historical Society, September 7, 1867.

L'eglise, and Rue des Granges, all in the very heart of the town of St. Louis.

Father Bernard's mode of life was very simple. An old negro-slave, Melanie, kept house for him. Besides their Pastor, the Parish employed several other officers, all of the laity. A chanter or two, a sacristan, a verger with pike and halberd like the Swiss in foreign Cathedrals; all these petty officers received a share of the usual fees paid to the Pastor. From a Table of Fees for Funerals made by Father Gibault, whilst Pastor of New Madrid, it appears that, of the total fee of nine pesos (about nine dollars) four pesos went to the pastor, one peso to the assistant priest, one peso to the sacristan, one peso for digging the grave, and one peso for placing the wooden cross, making nine pesos in all.<sup>8</sup>

The villagers had been accustomed to pay tithes, yet, according to Canadian rules, not one tenth, but only one twenty-sixth part of the corn and wheat raised by the farmer. But even this small emolument was claimed by the State under Spanish rule, in view of the annual salary of four hundred to six hundred pesos paid by the government to each priest. There were no fees for Baptisms and Marriages, but a more or less generous honorarium was usually offered. At marriages the witnesses and more prominent guests, would repair to the Sacristy after the mass, in company of the bridal pair, to sign their names, or make their mark, and to lay down on the table an offering to the priest. Hence all the Marriage Records of our old French parishes are filled with the signatures of the men of importance in their day and even of historical characters.

Of the mild and gentle Capuchin's priestly labors during thirteen and a half years of his stay at St. Louis, the Church Records give us some interesting information.

From May, 1776 to November 1789, Father Bernard baptized 410 whites, 106 negroes, and 92 Indians; he solemnized the marriages of 115 whites, 1 negro, 2 Indians and 1 mixed white and Indian; and he buried 222 whites, 60 negroes and 44 Indians.

Two years after Father Bernard's arrival in St. Louis, on June 20th, 1778, Pierre Laclède Liguist died near the Post of Arkansas, on his homeward voyage from New Orleans, where he had gone on business in the fall of 1776. As Ovid said of his great predecessor: "*Virgilium vidi tantum*," Father Bernard might have said of the Founder of St. Louis "*Laclède I only saw*."<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> A similar list of fees in Father Bernard's handwriting is in my collection of MS.

<sup>9</sup> His name occurs among the witnesses of the installation of Father Bernard.

In the fourth year of Father Bernard's gentle sway over the people of St. Louis, May 26, 1780, a serious attempt was made by the British to sweep both the American and the Spanish powers out of the Mississippi Valley. Simultaneous attacks were to be made on New Orleans from the South, on the Ohio River country and the Illinois settlements on both sides of the river from the northeast. For this latter bloody business the warlike tribes of the North were engaged with liberal gifts. Governor de Leyba gained some information in regard to the proposed assault, but he seems to have disregarded the signs of the coming storm until it was almost ready to burst over his little town. But he did rouse himself at last and sent for all the reenforcements he could reach. It was the afternoon of the 26th of May, that saw the approach of a flotilla of canoes and pirogues crossing the river to the north of the town. The citizens of St. Louis defended their homes with spirit and bravery; and the Indians who had depended on a surprise attack, quickly withdrew before the unfailing fire of these dauntless woodrangers and boatmen. The Spanish garrison consisting of fifty men and five cannons under Captain de Leyba did valiant work. Some of the Indian bands scattered about the country found several farmers and their slaves in the fields, whom they tomahawked.<sup>10</sup>

Governor de Leyba has been stigmatized by some as a traitor, by others as a coward. We believe he was neither the one nor the other, but only one of the many that trust too much in themselves. Misfortune, however, was now following in his tracks; on December 6th, 1779, his wife was buried, and he himself in 1780 followed her into eternity.

The following entry in the Book of Sepulchres was made by Father Bernard: "In the year 1780, the 28th of June, I, a priest and Capuchin Missionary, Pastor of St. Louis, country of the Illinois, province of Louisiana, Bishopric of Cuba, have interred in this Church in front of the balustrade on the right, the body of Don Ferdinand Leyba, Captain of Infantry in the battalion of Louisiana, actual Commandant of this post, having received all the sacraments of our mother, holy Church. In faith whereof, I have signed, the day and year as above.

F. Bernard, Miss.

Shortly before the Governor's premature death Father Bernard solemnly blessed the "first stone of the fort on the hill back of the church, it was named Fort St. Charles, in honor of Charles III, King of Spain." This is the stone Martello fort which was yet standing as late as 1820, at the southwest corner of Walnut and Fourth Streets, where the Southern Hotel now sleeps in its decay. The barracks for

---

<sup>10</sup> For documents cf. "Spanish Regime in Missouri," Houck, vol. I, pp. 167-182.

the Spanish troops was a long, low stone building on the north side of Walnut street, and immediately opposite the hotel. After the change of government from Spain to the United States, the old fort was for a long time used as a common jail.

Every Sunday and Holy day of obligation Highmass was sung with all the joyful accompaniment, to which the French Catholics are accustomed by nature and early training. With the usual sermon the service generally lasted until noon. As all the inhabitants of the town were Catholics, all of them, with the exception of the sick, would attend the Highmass. After the mass the Governor's announcements were made at the church-door. Even business transactions were concluded then and there. In the afternoon the young people enjoyed themselves on the river bank or at the home of one or the other of the village patriarchs, singing and dancing to their hearts content.

## FATHER BERNARD'S CONGREGATION

It was a gay, cheerful, and lighthearted congregation over which Father Bernard presided, fond of song and witty anecdote, yet simple in their manners, and dress and the pleasures of the table. They still lived in the style of the peasantry of old France one hundred and fifty years ago. Their language was not the pure French of France, but a synthesis of the antiquated dialect of the Provinces, from which they originally came. As St. Louis had never been an Indian mission, the mingling of races was less observable here than in the towns beyond the river. Now and then there was a regular marriage between a white man and an Indian woman, with one or two instances of white women marrying leading Indian chiefs or warriors. But such marriages were not encouraged by public sentiment. The people loved France and the customs of their old homes in France. "Notwithstanding that they had been so long separated by an immense wilderness from civilized society, they still retained all the suavity and politeness of their race" as even the severest critics admit:<sup>1</sup> "they were naturally of a peaceful disposition, educated to obey, kept in hand by the Church, and acutely sensitive to the disgrace of punishment. They were docile and respectful to their superiors, helpful and kindly to their equals, civil and complaisant to all. They liked to call one another "brother" or "cousin," and to be mutually obliging."<sup>2</sup>

The people's honesty in business dealings was proverbial among friends and foes. Only one example from the address of Judge Primm. "Real estate frequently passed from hand to hand, without deed or writing of any kind, and for trifling considerations." When the population began to increase by immigration, and to become heterogeneous in its character, many of these lands became valuable; and if, upon examining the records, the chain of title to them was found defective, by lack of deed from the original owner, his children never hesitated to affirm the act of their ancestor; and whenever applied to for that purpose, the answer was, "I will make good what my father has done." And no remuneration was asked for or expected.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ford, Gov. Thomas, "History of Illinois," p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Scharf, "History of St. Louis," p. 273.

<sup>3</sup> Primm, Wilson, in "New Year's Day in St. Louis," in Missouri Historical Society Collections, vol. II, p. 17.

Their dress was as simple as their mode of life. Monette, describes the winter dress of the men as "a coarse capote drawn over the shirt." The women, were remarkable for the sprightliness of their conversation and the grace and elegance of their manners. And the whole population lived lives of alternate toil, pleasure, innocent amusement, and gayety. Filial piety also was one of the beautiful traits of character in these people. To quote once more from the delightful pages of Judge Primm: "Before day, New Year's morning, the whole population attended mass. When that duty had been performed, the next was to receive the parental blessing and then could be seen the children, grandchildren, and the great grandchildren, each on their bended knees, imploring a blessing from the authors of their being, and that blessing was given, even coupled with a heartfelt prayer, that God, the Father of all, would ratify it in heaven and so guide and protect them, amidst the joys and sorrows, the snares and perils of this life, as to fit them for another and better existence."<sup>4</sup>

This touching ceremony, repeated at the commencement of each year, gave tone to the whole current of their thoughts and acts. Filial piety, was their guiding star. The young never dreamed of forming matrimonial alliance with each other, without the full and unqualified assent, not only of the immediate parents, but of the family relatives, and even grown men settled in life, scarcely ever entered into any important business contract, without the assent or advice of the parents; and never even when it might otherwise have been to his advantage, has a child been known to repudiate the acts of his parents.

When the consent of the parents had been obtained to a marriage, the affianced pair would together visit the relatives, saying: "Nous sommes venue demander votre consentement a notre mariage:" "We have come to ask your consent to our marriage."<sup>5</sup>

Marriage was held in high esteem, though the marriage bond was not unfrequently broken. Yet, a bigamist could find no sympathy or toleration. "When it was discovered the Bonaventure Collell, who married Dr. Conde's daughter, had another wife in Spain, the marriage was forthwith annulled, Collell imprisoned, and all his property seized and confiscated."<sup>6</sup>

"In food and drink they are temperate," says another witness, "they mostly limit their desires to vegetables, soups, and coffee. They are great smokers of tobacco. Ardent spirits are seldom used, except by the most laborious classes of society. They even dislike white wines

---

<sup>4</sup> Primm, Wilson, "New Year's Day in St. Louis," in Missouri Historical Society Collections, vol. II, p. 16

<sup>5</sup> Primm, l. c. p.

<sup>6</sup> Scharf, "History of St. Louis, p. 306.

because they possess too much spirit . . . . Clarets and other light red wines are common among them; and those who can afford it are not sparing of this beverage. The fathers of St. Louis were the very soul of hospitality. The master of the house, out of respect for his guests, frequently waited on them himself.”<sup>7</sup>

Sober, frugal, not too industrious to lose the joy of life, but plodding enough to keep themselves and their loved ones from want, these spiritual children of Father Bernard, grew into one family of many children, whom, with all their faults, we cannot but love and honor. “The Church was not only the place of worship, but also the center of their daily lives, the place of joyful resort on Sundays and Holy Days, of which there were many more than today, and Father Bernard, their gentle pastor was also their trusted advisor, director and companion of young and old. “The people looked up to him with affection and reverence, and he upon them with compassion and tenderness. He was ever ready to sympathize with them in all their sorrows, enter into all their joys, and counsel them in all their perplexities.”<sup>8</sup>

We may well picture to ourselves the tall dignified figure of the Capuchin Monk, in his habit of brown with a heavy beaded rosary dangling from his girdle, and a kindly smile on his large open countenance, walking along one of the streets of the village, now stopping at a shop to speak a word of cheer to the master, who has just lost his wife, then passing on to one of the block-houses to visit some sick person, then coming out of the door, and making a profound bow to one of the aristocrats of the village, we see him suddenly surrounded by a noisy band of children, who insistently plead with their “Father” that he come and play with them. Now from the next house comes a silvery voice of greeting. It is the chanter’s daughter and one of the singers too. And so his morning walk continues until it is time for the usual Catechism class. What a quiet, happy life he leads in this homely village full of blessed peace? There is no fear in the hearts of his people: there is only reverence and childlike affection. There are some among them that cause him anxious care; but they, too, will at last return to God. Many of those that now are faithful and true, were at one time forgetful of the religious practices their religion enjoined. During the journeys and voyages, their marriages may not have received the sanction of the Church, their children may have remained unbaptized. But they always retained the feeling, that they must be reconciled to the Church, and have their marriages solemnized with the sacred

---

<sup>7</sup> Stoddart, Amos, “Sketches, Historical and Descriptive of Louisiana,” 1812. pp. 325-326.

<sup>8</sup> Ford, *op. cit.*, pp. 35 and 36.

rites and ceremonies, and their children must be baptized and instructed in the Catechism and admitted by the priest to their First Holy Communion. They considered it a religious duty to make their will, in which the first clause is sure to read somewhat like the following; though not always in such beautiful terms. "First as a Christian and a Catholic I commend my soul to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, beseeching His divine bounty, by the merits of His passion, and by the intercession of the Holy Virgin, of Holy St. John, my guardian angel and of all the spirits of the celestial court, to receive it among the blessed."<sup>9</sup>

The greatest delight of these people was the round of feasts and festivals of the Catholic year. Christmas with its midnight mass in the brightly ornamented Church, the glad New Year, the Epiphany, the Feast of Three Kings whom the star led to Bethlehem, the solemn functions of Holy Week, the Commemoration of Christ's Resurrection from the Tomb, the Feast of the Ascension, Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Ghost; and then, scattered throughout the year, like fragrant flowers, the Feasts of the Blessed Mother of God. But the most glorious celebration was that of Corpus Christi day with its sacramental procession through the streets of the town, with its music and song triumphant, and its salutes of all the cannon, to Christ their King and Lord.

All felt secure and contented under the truly paternal government of Catholic Spain and the heavenly ministrations of the Church.

We have drawn this picture of the patriarchal age of our city from the various accounts made at the time or shortly after by disinterested observers.

Father Bernard not only saw the rapid growth of his own village and parish, but also lived to see it the proud mother of four gracious daughters, Carondelet, St. Ferdinand or Florissant, St. Charles, and Portage des Sioux. Carondelet, the oldest of these villages, grew out of a trading post established by Clement Delor de Treget, a native of Quercy, in the south of France. It was a small stone house on the River des Peres near its mouth, about ten miles below St. Louis, probably on the very site of the Jesuit missionary establishment for the Kaskaskia Indians and the French traders of the Mississippi Valley, under Fathers Marest, Pinet and Mermet, and the Great Chief Rouensa. Coming up from his home in St. Genevieve, Delor was charmed with the diversified landscape of hill and prairie and woodland, and obtained a grant of land from St. Ange. At first the settlement that grew up around the founder's house, was called Delor's Village, then Catalan's Prairie, then Louisburg and finally, Carondelet, in honor of one of the

---

<sup>9</sup> First clause of the Will of John B. Vallean, dated November 23, 1768.

governors of Louisiana, Baron Carondelet. Among the jovial wood-rangers and boatmen it was known as "Vide Poche" (Empty Pocket.)

The village grew but slowly, and had, at Father Bernard's time, about twenty families, all Catholics. The largest settlement of that time, in neighborhood of St. Louis, was St. Ferdinand or Florissant. Francois Dunegant is named as its founder, and 1786 as the date of its foundation. The place is mentioned previous to the date given, Francois Dunegant being described as "Civil and Military Commandant at Florissant," as early as 1785. Yet this may refer to the Florissant Valley as such and the plantations therein without any reference to a special village. St. Ferdinand de Florissant is situated, as Edward Flagg wrote in 1836, "in a highly romantic valley upon the banks of a creek of the same name, and is the heart of one of the most fertile and luxuriant valleys ever subjected to cultivation."<sup>10</sup> In 1798 long before Flagg's visit, Zenon Trudeau, Spanish Lieutenant Governor of Upper Louisiana, had this to say in regard to St. Ferdinand; "It is about eleven years since the village of San Fernando and Carondelet have been settled by the people of San Louis, who at the present time, get a great part of their provisions from these two towns."<sup>11</sup> Stoddart calls the valley "the granary of St. Louis." Marais des Liards, Cottonwood Swamp, is mentioned in Trudeau's report as a home of hunters and of a few planters. There was no Church building nor priest in the Florissant Valley, when Trudeau wrote, and he advises his government "to send them a priest of the Irish nation," who might "also serve the small village of Marais des Liards."<sup>12</sup>

The population was almost exclusively French and Catholic in Father Bernard's time. The reason for asking, that an Irish priest be sent to St. Ferdinand in 1798 will appear, if we consider that many English-Americans were coming to the country, some of them Catholics, others heretics, and all in need of instruction. There was St. Andrew on the Missouri, where the Commandant, James Mackay, a native of Scotland, complained that his settlement could not thrive, if only Catholics were admitted. The Spanish government was not desirous of excluding English-Americans, even if they were non-catholics. The remedy to be introduced was the conversion of the heretics by Irish priests. Whether Father Bernard spoke English, we do not know: we do know, however, that he spoke French and Spanish and his mother tongue, the German.

St. Charles, the third one of the dependencies intrusted to Father Bernard, as pastor of St. Louis, was the earliest white settlement north

<sup>10</sup> Flagg, E. "The Far West," p. 261.

<sup>11</sup> Houck, L., "The Spanish Regime in Missouri," p. 249.

<sup>12</sup> Houck, op. cit., p. 250.

of the Missouri River. Founded in 1769, it was known at first as "Les Petites Cotes, the Little Hills," as the village was situated at the foot of a range of hills. The first settler was Louis Blanchette, a native of the diocese of Quebec in Canada. The town grew rapidly. The inhabitants divided their time and energy between the fur trade and the cultivation of their lands in the two commonfields adjacent to the town. In 1797 the village had about eighty families.

The fourth dependency or mission of Father Bernard was Portage des Sioux, a village located on the Mississippi River on the tongue of land that runs to a point at the mouth of the Missouri. A portage means a strip of land between two rivers where the canoes, after having carried the Indian or voyageur, are now carried by them from one river to another. Such a portage gave the name of the village, "des Sioux" was added in memory of the Sioux Indians, who had used the portage there, Francois Saucier in 1765 established himself at the portage and quietly induced a number of the Creoles on the American side to join him. He laid out the village in 1799 and acted as Commandant of the post until the end of the Spanish regime.

All these French settlements, villages and towns were under the spiritual power of Father Bernard. His visits for the purpose of holding services and of comforting the sick and dying must have been frequent. No doubt, he was the owner of some kind of conveyance. No doubt also, these visits were a source of consolation and joy to the good pastor: yet in the end they were bound to tell on the health and buoyancy of spirit.

Of all these dependencies not one had a church building up to 1789. It was after Highmass on the 13th day of October 1788, that the entire congregation consisting of thirty-two families, of Les Petites Cotes was assembled at the house of Louis Blanchet, founder of the village, in presence of Manuel de Perez, Governor and Commander in Chief of the Western District of the Illinois, and of Reverend Father Bernard, Missionary and Pastor of the Parish of St. Louis, and of the Sieur Louis Blanchet, founder, who wish to have a Church for said place, and did unanimously determine, consent and agree amongst themselves to build a Church of logs, on ground 40 feet long by 30 feet wide. This resolution was signed by all, either by name or mark, Maturin Bouvet was appointed syndic. The building was to be completed in the Spring of 1789. The place was then called "Les Petites Cotes."

There were good roads leading from St. Louis to St. Ferdinand, St. Charles, and Carondelet. Portage de Sioux was easily accessible by boat. On the way to Carondelet, there were several habitations, as the Soulard Place, the Bent Place and several others, in Father Ber-

nard's time, of course, they bore other names. The Bent Place was well known to the people of Cahokia as the best landing for canoes. Then there was immediately South of this a little Indian village occupied by remnants of the Shawnee and Delaware tribes united in one band. This site is now occupied by the Arsenal.

We possess only one literary monument from the hand of Father Bernard de Limpach: It is a pathetic plea to his Superior in New Orleans to be recalled from the place he had served so long, and we may add, so well. The letter was written in 1787. Eleven years had passed since he departed from his countrymen of the German Coast for the wilderness of the North. Broken with afflictions of body and mind, he begs to be allowed to return to them. As a further reason for his request Father Bernard says: "The Parish which is very numerous, has four villages depending on it, and these increase daily by the emigration of French families that establish themselves here, to be free from the vexations of the Americans, who are on the eastern side of the river. If I insist on a removal, I am guided by the hope of finding somewhere else an alleviation to my bodily and to mental trouble. Everything else is of no consideration to me."<sup>13</sup> Father Bernard's<sup>14</sup> petition was not granted until the autumn of 1789.

---

<sup>13</sup> Original in Catholic Archives of America, Notre Dame University.

<sup>14</sup> On February 24th, 1790, after a voyage of about ninety days, Father Bernard established himself as Pastor of St. Gabriel, Iberville. In the next year he became Pastor of Point Coupee, where he died on March 27th, 1796.

## DISCORD IN CHURCH AND STATE

One of the great historians of Rome has said "*Concordia parvae res crescunt, discordia maximae dilabuntur.*"<sup>1</sup> How applicable this sentence is to the religious conditions obtaining on both sides of the Mississippi during the next ten years after Father Bernard de Limpach's arrival in St. Louis is quite apparent. On the Missouri side the spirit of concord was prevalent, as we have seen; on the Illinois side the spirit of discord helped to destroy what was left of the greatness of former days. Not that there were no good and true men among the priests of the eastern shore; but the unfortunate clash of authority between Baltimore and Quebec was certainly not conducive to harmony between the priests. Father Gibault had been appointed by Bishop Briand, not only as missionary and parish priest, but also as Vicar General in all the former Illinois country east of the Mississippi River. In 1785 when he took up his abode in Vincennes he considered himself as still invested with all these powers, as they had never been withdrawn. On the other hand Dr. John Carroll of Baltimore, the Superior of the Missions in the United States, held that, as all the territory as far as the Mississippi was now part and parcel of the United States, it was also placed under his spiritual authority. Hence he sent several priests to these forlorn regions. They were not of his own clergy, but men who had come to him with special recommendations for the West. The first one of these was the Carmelite Paul de St. Pierre, who had been one of the chaplains of Rochambeau's army during the revolution and whom the French envoy had requested to remain in America, among the French Catholics on the banks of the Mississippi. As early as July 19, 1783 Father Farmer, the Vicar-General of Dr. Carroll of Baltimore, wrote to his Superior in regard to Father Paul: "At present I know of no communication with the Illinois, nor can I think there is any proper missionary there. With regard to the Carmelite Friar all that I can say of him is this;—No sooner did he arrive in Virginia with the French troops than he wrote a letter to me desiring to stay in the mission, and therefore inquired where to obtain faculties for that purpose. When I pressed him last fall to stay with the French Consul in Virginia, (he, having a yearly pension from the Queen of France, is under obligation to take up his abode where some French are) he excused himself

---

<sup>1</sup> Sallust, Jugurtha, 10. 6.

by saying he, being immediately under the Consul, would not be so free to serve the people, but oblige them to attend him and his hours. The Capuchin of New York has contracted a friendship with him last Fall in the West Indies, and speaks highly of him."<sup>2</sup>

When Father Paul de St. Pierre approached Father Farmer with the request for Faculties, the Vicar-General wrote to Dr. Carroll, the Prefect Apostolic: "—The Bearer being already known to your Reverence, needs not my commendation. When he arrived during the war, he immediately by letter signified to me his desire, to be a missionary in these parts. He designed to fix himself at the Illinois. I see no reason why I should not be glad of his zeal nor why Your Reverence should not grant him necessary faculties, *servatis servandis*. You may be assured that nothing happened this long time so agreeable to me as your appointment to the office of Prefect Apostolic."<sup>3</sup>

In the meantime Father de St. Pierre had departed for the West. Shortly after his arrival at Vincennes he sent another application for faculties through Father Farmer, which was transmitted to Dr. Carroll, August 1785. By this time Father Gibault had established his residence in Vincennes. Presenting his credentials from Vicar General Farmer of Baltimore, Father de St. Pierre asked for a temporary assignment, until Dr. Carroll should make other dispositions. But as Father Gibault did not wish to act in this conflict of authority, he advised the Carmelite to accept the Parish of Ste. Genevieve from the Spanish authorities, May 18, 1785. Here he continued to labor for the cause of Christ until July 10, 1786, as the Records of that ancient Parish witness. But as Kaskaskia became orphaned by the departure of Father Louis Payet, Father Paul came to the assistance of this parish also, no doubt with the approval of Father Gibault, as representative of the Bishop of Quebec. Whilst attending Kaskaskia, de Saint Pierre received from Baltimore a notification in regard to the Jubilee, a recognition of his good standing in the Diocese.

Ever since Father de St. Pierre's departure for the Illinois country Monsignor Carroll was in a state of unrest in regard to the Carmelite Father. To Cardinal Antonelli, Prefect of the Propaganda at Rome, he wrote on February 27, 1785;

"As to the Catholics who are in the territory, bordering on the River called the Mississippi and in all that region, which following that river, extends to the Atlantic Ocean, and from it extends to the limits of Carolina, Virginia and Pennsylvania—this tract of country contains,

---

<sup>2</sup> Farmer to Carroll in "American Catholic Historical Researches," vol. V. No. 1, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Farmer to Carroll, Researches, vol. XXIII, 3.

I hear, many Catholics formerly Canadians, who speak French, and I fear that they are destitute of priests. Before I received Your Eminence's letters there went to them a priest, German by birth, but who came last from France: he professes to belong to the Carmelite Order: he was furnished with no sufficient testimonials from his lawful Superior. What he is doing and what is the condition of the church in those parts, I expect soon to learn. The jurisdiction of the Bishop of Quebec formerly extended to some parts of that region: but I do not know whether he wishes to exercise any authority there, now that all these parts are subject to the United States."<sup>4</sup> Of course, the Prefect Apostolic was mistaken as to the former extent of the Bishop of Quebec's jurisdiction, and of his present claim. In reality Quebec had neither lost nor relinquished its former rights on the eastern borders of the Mississippi. Consequently Father Gibault, the Vicar-General of the Bishop of Quebec in the missions of the Illinois country, wrote from Vincennes, where he was then stationed, to his Superior, Bishop Hubert, June 6, 1786: "A barefooted German Carmelite, thirty-four years old, with his priest's orders, a certificate from the colonel of the regiment, in which he served as chaplain until peace was made, and some letters from the Grand Vicar (Farmer) granting him the privilege of ministering on the banks of the Mississippi, without mention of any place in particular, whose name is Father de St. Pierre, came here a year ago in the name of M. Carroll, bishop-elect of America, from whom came his orders. I did not dare to say anything to him without your orders, and I did not write to you about it sooner, for he kept saying that he was going to return to France by way of New Orleans. However he is still in the Illinois. He seemed to me very zealous, but with a zeal quite unmanageable for these regions without justice."<sup>5</sup>

Now, although Bishop Hubert was not very favorably disposed to Father Gibault, on account of their differences in the matter of the American Revolution, he did not disavow his action in regard to Father de St. Pierre. On the contrary he was glad of it, and subsequently urged Bishop Carrol "to continue for the present to provide for these missions, as it would be difficult for me, (the Bishop of Quebec) to supply them myself without perhaps some offence to the British government."<sup>6</sup>

Father Paul de Saint Pierre was therefore, in good standing, in as far as he had lawful powers from the Diocese of Quebec; consequently his administration of Kaskaskia and Cahokia was without a legal flaw, no matter what Dr. Carroll's intentions had been. Yet even after this explanation, Dr. Carroll's doubts and fears in regard to the Carmelite's

---

<sup>4</sup> Shea, J. G., "Life and Times of Archbishop Carroll," p. 257.

<sup>5</sup> "Illinois Historical Collections," Virginia S., vol. I, p. 547.

<sup>6</sup> "Illinois Historical Collections," Virginia S., vol. I, p. 588.

legal status did not cease. As late as January 20, 1790 he states in a letter to Father Gibault:

"I am also worried in regard to M. de Saint Pierre. He left here without any power to administer the sacraments, for at that time I possessed no right to grant it to him; and since his departure I have been unable to make up my mind to send him that power, because I am in no wise assured that he came to America with the consent of the superiors of the Order or with such approbation as the usages of ecclesiastical discipline require,"<sup>7</sup>

Bishop Carroll's main difficulty sprang from an unfortunate misunderstanding. The decree of the Propaganda appointing Dr. Carroll Superior of the Mission in the Thirteen United States of America, dated November 26, 1784, contained the restrictive clause that he was to give faculties to no priest coming into the country, except those sent and approved by the Sacred Congregation. P. Paul de Saint Pierre did not have this approbation, having come here long before that restriction was made; but for the same reason he did not require that approbation, as the letter of Cardinal Antonelli, which accompanied the decree, informs Dr. Carroll that, "the faculties which His Holiness communicates to him, the Superior of the Mission, are also communicated to the other priests of the same states, except the administration of Confirmation, which is reserved for him alone."<sup>8</sup>

Msgr. Carroll, in the course of time, also inclined to this view and entertained a more favorable opinion of de Saint Pierre's ecclesiastical status. At least he permitted him to continue his ministry under whatever authority he may have claimed to act, a course that was certainly the most sensible and just one, in view of the immense distance of these missions from the See of Baltimore and the absolute dearth of Missionaries in the west. De Saint Pierre's readiness to accept responsibility when matters were so urgent, deserved recognition. The Recommendation given to de Saint Pierre by the French minister was a good sign, and, if the worst should come to the worst, no one could blame the authorities at Baltimore if they tolerated something which they could in no wise prevent.

As we now understand the whole matter, we feel that the coming of the Carmelite Father to the Illinois country was a real God-send, a boon that enabled hundreds and hundreds to save their souls, and greatly helped to tide over the Church, during its stormiest period, unto a more gracious time.

It was not a pleasant place to live in, the Kaskaskia of 1786. Law and order seem to have vanished from the land. The French authorities

<sup>7</sup> "Illinois Historical Collections," Virginia S., vol. I, p. 592.

<sup>8</sup> Shea, *op. cit.*, pp. 243, 244, 246.

were superseded by the British. These were driven out by the Virginians, and they in turn had departed, leaving the poor Creoles to the mercy of marauding Indians and upstart politicians whose sole endeavor it was to deprive trustful people of their homes and their honor. When the stalwart Carmelite arrived, his honest blood began to boil, and he did not mince words in his attack upon these birds of prey. Of course he was sued by two of the main sinners before a renegade magistrate. Father Paul refused to appear before a tribunal that was "incompetent to judge ecclesiastical persons." As to his accusers, he told them to carry the case before "the Honorable Congress and the Bishop." The aggrieved persons took the hint for lack of something more effective: they brought their complaint before the authorities at Baltimore saying: "We are doubtful whether you have sent us a priest to look after our spiritual interests, as he is more concerned with temporal affairs and acts as a lawyer in this country. He endeavors to ruin us in our commerce, and to take away our credit . . . I do not think, my Lord after the letter that I have seen, that a pastor ought to meddle with temporal matters."<sup>9</sup> This seems to have been the end of the case against Paul de Saint Pierre, whom the complainants called Heiligenstein, which very probably was his name before taking the garb and style of a Carmelite.

Father de Saint Pierre remained Pastor of Ste. Genevieve and administrator of the neighboring parish of Kaskaskia until the arrival of the new pastor, Father Guignes in 1786. Father Gibault, who had been repeatedly asked by the good people of Cahokia to take charge of this forsaken and almost ruined parish and Indian Mission, requested Father de Saint Pierre to undertake the laborious task, sending him at the same time the power of attorney he himself had received from the Superior of the Seminary of Quebec by authority of the Bishop concerning the mission of Cahokia. The last letter of Father de Saint Pierre from Kaskaskia, a latin letter to Father Louis Payet at Detroit, is dated, *Parochia Immaculatae Conceptionis, die 18 Februarii, A. D. 1786*. From this date on to 1789 de Saint Pierre was pastor of the Parish of the Holy Family and the Tamarois Mission at Cahokia, just across the river from the rising city of St. Louis.

It is a remarkable coincidence, that in these critical years two German priests, P. Bernard de Limpach and P. Paul de St. Pierre, the one at St. Louis, the other at Cahokia, separated by the great river but united by the bond of a magnanimous friendship, should unfold their blessed missionary activities in spite of all attacks and misunderstandings. Prior to de Saint Pierre's coming, Father Bernard had, at Father Gibault's invitation, attended to the spiritual wants of the church at Cahokia, and Father de Saint Pierre was ready to return the favor in St. Louis,

---

<sup>9</sup> "Illinois Historical Collections," Virginia S., vol. I, p. 521.

if Father Bernard should be called away. On April 25, 1787 Father Bernard writes to his Superior in New Orleans "The parish of St. Louis is no more than half a league from that of Kahos (Cahokia) which at present has a priest, who was chaplain to the army of the King of France; and therefore it can more easily remain for a time without a priest, than other parishes farther down in the colony, as, for instance, that of St. Charles, whose subjects no doubt are no less dear to God and to the King than those of Illinois."<sup>10</sup>

In those primitive days of pathless forest and trackless prairie the rivers appeared more as avenues of approach than as a dividing line, a circumstance that may explain, to a certain extent, the strange wanderings to and fro of our early priests, especially as the population on both sides of the Mississippi was really one people of Catholic French.

On the 6th day of June 1786, Father Gibault sent a message to Quebec concerning the zealous or rather over-zealous, Carmelite, "with the privilege of ministering on the banks of the Mississippi." On the 17th day of October of the same year, Dr. Carroll's Vicar-General, de La Valiniere, writes concerning a meeting he had held with P. Bernard de Limpach and another priest in St. Louis, in which several charges against P. de St. Pierre had been discussed and proved to be without foundation, and he ordains that the good people of Cahokia give him, as their lawful pastor, all the satisfaction in their power. The letter was ordered to be read on Sunday, after the sermon of the parochial Mass, and afterward affixed to the door of the church.<sup>11</sup> But ere six months had elapsed, a remarkable change had come over de La Valiniere's position in regard to the one time "Lawful pastor," now only "acting in the capacity of Parson of Cahokia." The change is explained in the document entitled "Letter from M. Huet de La Valiniere, Vicar General in all the districts north of the Ohio, called Belle Riviere, along the Mississippi, Wabash, Miami etc., to the gentlemen of Cahokia, greeting and blessing in our Lord."<sup>12</sup> It is not very pleasant reading, this letter of the Vicar-General and whatever may have been the merits of the case, it should not have been laid before the people for adjudication. To rehearse these charges against one of his priests before a gathering of laymen was sufficiently imprudent; but here to add to each charge the matter-of-fact answers of the accused priest, and to

---

<sup>10</sup> "American Catholic Researches," January 1898. The Church of St. Charles on the German Coast, Cote des Allemands, a few miles above the city of New Orleans, was founded by the German settlers returning from Arkansas after the failure of John Law, the proprietor of the seigniory on the Arkansas River.

<sup>11</sup> "Illinois Historical Collections," Virginia S., vol. I, pp. 548 and 549.

<sup>12</sup> "Illinois Historical Collections," Virginia S., vol. I, p. 551.

season the whole proceeding with diverse slurs and insinuations, was certainly not calculated to win the parishioners to the side of authority.

But before we enter upon this unfortunate quarrel let us see who and what Father de La Valiniere really was. Born at Varade in France, January 10, 1732 Pierre Huet de La Valiniere went to Paris and entering the Seminary of St. Sulpice, became a member of that community. He felt the attraction of the American mission fields, which at last drew him to Montreal. Here he was ordained by Bishop Pontbriand, June 15, 1755. Serving at first as a professor in the Seminary, he was successively transferred to five parishes within twenty years. In 1779 Canada was invaded by an American army. Bishop Briand was absolutely loyal to the British interests all through the years of the Revolution: only a few of the clergy sympathized with the American Cause, among them Father de La Valiniere. This circumstance brought about his exile from Canada.<sup>13</sup> Governor Haldimand writes as follows in extenuation of the drastic manner employed in deporting the refractory priest:

“Fiery, Faictious and turbulent, no ways deficient in point of wit and parts, he was too dangerous at this present crisis to be allowed to remain here, and accordingly, taking advantage of his disagreement with the Seminary of Montreal and with the Bishop, he is now, with the consent of the latter, sent home; as it rather appears that the blow proceeds from his ecclesiastical superiors, any noise or disturbance about it here is avoided, and at the same time may oblige the clergy, especially the French part of them, to be careful and circumspect; the French alliance with the Colonies in rebellion has certainly operated a great change upon their minds, and it too generally runs through the whole body of Canadians. However disagreeable it may be, it is improper he should be permitted to return to his native country. I think he must either be confined, though well treated, or sent prisoner at large to a remote part, where some inspection may be had over his conduct. In short, there cannot be a doubt that, while these troubles last, he will seek every opportunity of serving France, and of being of Disservice to the British interests.”<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> American Catholic Historical Researches,” vol. XXIII, pp. 203-255. Also vol. XI, pp. 98-101.

<sup>14</sup> “American Catholic Historical Researches,” vol. XXIII, p. 203. It was during that time, (1758) that he succeeded in rescuing from the hands of the Indians, a little Irish girl named O’Flaherty, at the very moment when these barbarians were about to make her perish by fire. “They had already tied her to the stake with Mrs. O’Flaherty, her mother, and were preparing to burn them both, when that ecclesiastic, by his prayers, his entreaties and promises, succeeded in delivering them from death.” This child, whom Madam d’Youville received under her roof, devoted herself to her benefactress and became a Sister of Charity.

Lord George Germain disapproved Haldeman's act. Father de la Valiniere was set at liberty and, after many hardships and dangers surmounted, he directed his course to New York.<sup>15</sup> Dr. Carroll would not or could not give him employment. Father Farmer, his Vicar-General, in February 1786 transmitted to the exiled priest the "power to perform parochial work, without restriction, to the French." At Father de la Valiniere's request, Dr. Carroll gave him permission to go west, and on the day of his departure made him his Vicar-General with full faculties.<sup>16</sup>

Father de la Valiniere paid a brief visit to Father Farmer at Philadelphia, thence he journeyed on foot to Pittsburg, and by batteau down the Ohio to Kaskaskia, where he arrived in the summer of 1786. At first his fiery zeal for justice and righteousness, in open opposition to the self-appointed governor, John Dodge and his harpy crew, won him the love and admiration of the habitants. And when through his appeal to Congress, the turbulent robber faction was overthrown, Father de la Valiniere felt himself safe in the hearts of his people.

Yet fiery and self-willed as he was, he was led by an insignificant circumstance to kindle a new and dangerous fire of opposition, a conflagration which eventually drove him out of the Illinois. The only priests over whom the new Vicar-General had jurisdiction, were the veteran Pierre Gibault at Vincennes and the Carmelite Paul de Saint Pierre at Cahokia. Both were honorable men and faithful ministers of God, doing their duty according to their best knowledge of the situation in which they found themselves: But Father de la Valiniere, with practically no experience of missionary life in the wild west, felt the urge within himself to let them feel his superiority in ecclesiastical knowledge, as well as in canonical power. The questions he raised in his letter to Father de Saint Pierre were either trivial or did not concern him.<sup>17</sup> Father Paul answered the letter, justifying his conduct, in a straightforward manner, but as de la Valiniere had indulged in a rather paternal tone of reproof, Father de Saint Pierre injected some insinuations regarding Father de la Valiniere's former trouble. The good Vicar-General thought his position in jeopardy and addressed a public letter to the people of Cahokia, in which he made some caustic remarks and undignified charges against their pastor, whom he had praised a short time before, and even called in question his ordination to the priesthood. Father de Saint Pierre's parishioners, who loved

---

<sup>15</sup> "American Catholic Historical Researches," vol. XXIII, p. 212.

<sup>16</sup> "American Catholic Historical Researches," l. c., pp. 218 and 219.

<sup>17</sup> Priated in Researches, vol. XXIII, pp. 221-223. Father de Saint Pierre's answer, *ibidem*, p. 225.

and respected him, returned a lengthy reply, from which we cull the following strong passage:

"We answer the same (your letter) by declaring to you, all of us, with an unanimous voice, that Mr. de St. Pierre our Parson, pastor and missionary, has all our confidence, and that we have only to praise and applaud him and the spiritual zeal with which he instructs us as well as our children. It is in vain that you expect to rob us of the confidence we repose in him. His attachment to us and his disinterestedness is known to us. Therefore, sir, dispense writing us anything more disadvantageous to the conduct of a Priest as worthy of respect as M. de St. Pierre whom we all reverence . . . ." <sup>18</sup>

Having thus caused a division among the Catholics of the Illinois country, Father de la Valiniere soon found that his old enemies were not completely shorn of power. Even in his own parish of Kaskaskia, the majority of the French turned against him. On September 21, 1787 a petition to Congress against him was signed by the inhabitants of Kaskaskia, in which his moral character is not touched, but a number of grievances are set forth, as the fury of his disposition, the theocratic despotism, the violence of his passions. <sup>19</sup> Father de la Valiniere saw that he could no longer accomplish any good; he therefore asked the Bishop of Quebec that Canada might be opened to him once more and receive the last fruits of his priesthood, as it had received the first. <sup>20</sup> This pathetic appeal remained unanswered. In 1789 Father de la Valiniere left the Illinois country going to New Orleans. In 1790 he was at St. Sulpice in Montreal, but the Bishop would not appoint him to any position and even refused him permission to celebrate mass.

The first and partly successful undertaking of P. de Saint Pierre at Cahokia was the attempt at recovering the property once held by the Seminary of Quebec for the Tamarois Mission, and for the Parish of the Holy Family, but sold or disposed of by the last Vicar-General under the French regime, Father Forget du Verger. The sales were null and void, as Father Forget had not been authorized by the rightful owners; in fact, Father Forget's conduct in leaving the Illinois country as he did was condemned by Bishop Briand of Quebec, as "shameful, even criminal."

All that remained to the ancient parish were "four walls of a stone house, with ground three hundred feet wide by nine hundred feet long, and also a field, three arpents wide with a length the same as the fields belonging to the inhabitants," and even these remnants of the parish-property, like that of the mission seigniority, were in danger of being lost.

<sup>18</sup> "Illinois Historical Collections," Virginia S., vol. I, pp. 560 ss.

<sup>19</sup> "American Catholic Historical Researches," vol. XXIII, pp. 228-231.

<sup>20</sup> "American Catholic Historical Researches," vol. XXIII, pp. 235 and 236.

Here Father de Saint Pierre's aggressiveness served him and his people to a good purpose. The story of the proceedings for the recovery of the mission property and the material upbuilding of the parish of the Holy Family is vividly described in a Report made by the people and the trustees of the Parish and Mission of Cahokia to the gentlemen of the Seminary of Quebec. After telling them the particulars of a recent sale of the remnants of the mission property the inhabitants of Cahokia say: "We made no opposition, since we had no knowledge at the time of the power of attorney, which the Superiors of the Chapter, by the authority of the Bishop had sent to Father Gibault, and of which Father Gibault had made no use." They continue: "This has been communicated to us about the month of April 1786, by M. de Saint Pierre, the priest serving our mission. . . . We have learned from this power of attorney, that all the sales made by Father Forget, Grand Vicar of Monseigneur, were null and void, since they had never been authorized by the Chapter. . . . Consequently, we have judicially set aside and annulled all the sales made by Father Forget and others who have succeeded him, and have annulled the instruments which the attorney of M. Jutard has had made and which concerned the sale by auction. . . . We have reestablished you in the possession of these goods. For the purpose of lodging our pastor we have built a priest's house, which has cost us almost five thousand livres. . . (We were obliged to do this) because the house had been entirely ruined by the English and American troops who have lodged there. . . The defacements and injuries it had suffered during the time it was abandoned were such that there remain standing only the four walls, which could be repaired only with much labor; for they are without a roof-covering, ceiling, flooring, and the chimneys have tumbled down; there are some fences on the land; the orchard has been so devastated that there is left no vestige of it; all the other buildings have been destroyed, even to the wells which have been filled in."

"We have decided to build a church of the ruins of this house, for our former wooden church has fallen, and we are obliged to have Mass in a rented house. We have commenced to work on our projected church, which will cost us more than fifteen or sixteen thousand livres. Since the Mission has no longer any slaves, M. Forget having pocketed and carried away the money which he was able to collect for them, and since the three arpents of land will become a charge against the Mission, on account of the expense for fences and maintenance, we consulted with M. de St. Pierre and decided to rent it. . . . As to the other property, such as slaves, mills and animals, all these have been entirely dispersed and made unusable at the departure of M. Forget, either by sales, the granting of liberty to the slaves, or by donation

of the animals, so that none of these things are to be found at the Mission. There are still some families of Negroes on the Spanish side, who are of considerable value. They are living either at St. Louis of the Illinois or at New Orleans, and were either given their liberty or were sold by M. Forget without authority. There are some even here in the village of Cahokia. We have made a demand for those living on the Spanish side; but the major Commandant of the Illinois district has refused to do anything . . . Before we saw the contents of the power of attorney addressed to M. Gibault, we were uncertain, whether the sales by M. Forget were legal or not, and were fearful of taking false steps and of putting ourselves to useless expenses . . . This power of attorney, which has been sent us, has reassured us and opened our eyes; and we shall work now for the reestablishment of our Mission, as far as it shall be in our power."<sup>21</sup>

Up to this time Father Gibault's headquarters had been Kaskaskia. But in 1785 he removed to Vincennes. Here he pursued the same pastoral plan he had inaugurated years before in Kaskaskia. Writing to Mgr. Briand from Vincennes in 1786 he says: "I give the boys and girls an instruction twice a day: after mass, and in the evening before sunset. After each instruction I send the girls home and make the boys repeat the responses of the mass and the ceremonies of the Church for Sundays and Holydays. I preach too, on these days as often as I can."<sup>22</sup>

Here also, he found more leisure to devote to his books, a considerable collection of which he had accumulated, mostly on theological subjects, as he writes in 1786 to Bishop D'Esglis.<sup>23</sup> It also occurred to him in his solitude, that he had certain claims against the government of the United States, if not for services rendered, at least for expenses incurred. What Father Gibault did in this direction is best described in his letter to Governor Arthur St. Clair—"The undersigned memorialist has the honor to represent to your excellency from Cahokia, May 16, 1790: that, from the moment of the conquest of the Illinois country by Colonel George Rogers Clark, he has not been backward in venturing his life on many occasions in which he found that his presence was useful, and at all times sacrificing his property, which he gave for the support of the troops."<sup>24</sup>

In the St. Clair papers this letter is marked,

"Paper No. 24, and endorsed by St. Clair, the request of a Mr. Gibault for a small piece of land that has been in the occupation of

<sup>21</sup> "Illinois Historical Collections," Virginia S., vol. I, pp. 560 ss.

<sup>22</sup> "Illinois Historical Collections," Virginia S., vol. II, p. 535.

<sup>23</sup> "Illinois Historical Collection," Virginia S., vol. II, p. 545.

<sup>24</sup> "The St. Clair Papers," vol. II, p. 148, quoted in *Researches*, vol. V, p. 52.

the priests at Cahokia for a long time, having been assigned to them by the French; but he wishes to possess it in propriety. It is true that he was very useful to Gen. Clarke, upon many occasions, and has suffered very considerable losses; I believe no injury would be done to any one by his request being granted, but it was not for me to give away the lands of the United States.''<sup>25</sup>

Republics are proverbially ungrateful. Father Gibault had experienced that. Disappointment followed disappointment. His own people of Vincennes were not as responsive to his word as of old. Weary of constant struggle the missionary thought that he had earned a rest from his labors. Bishop Carroll does not seem to be pleased with his presence in what is now a part of the diocese of Baltimore. Canada is after all his home.

"Monseigneur", thus we read, "I pray you to consider that for the last twenty years I have served these missions, without ceasing, without, so to speak, a fixed abode, almost always journeying in all seasons of the year, always exposed to being massacred by the savages. My age of fifty-one years, the need I have of being more recollected after so much exterior work, which entailed so many and such long journeys, the repugnance that I have to serve under another Bishop, be it in Spain or in Republican America, and a thousand other reasons, lead me to expect you to grant my request and to recall me, which I earnestly ask, believing that I follow in this the will of God who inspires me with it for my salvation. As to the spiritual aid of the people in these parts, I can assure you that it will not be wanting to them, even less than formerly, since they have a priest at the Kaskaskias, another at the Cahokias, and that they will not be long without having one at Vincennes, if I leave it, for it is the favorite post of the American Congress. This all conspires to make me hope for my recall.'"<sup>26</sup>

But the recall did not come, and in September 1789 he took over from Father de Saint Pierre the Parish of the Holy Family at Cahokia to which he had been assigned long years ago by Bishop Briand of Quebec. Father Paul de Saint Pierre had been kindly received by the Spanish authorities; Father Gibault was now to follow him. Bishop Carroll was glad to give them both his fervent blessing on entering their new field of labor. We shall meet them again, the one in Ste. Genevieve, the other in New Madrid and the Post of Arkansas, both doing valiant and efficient service for the cause of God and His church.

---

<sup>25</sup> St. Clair Papers, vol. II, p. 148. Researches, vol. V, p. 53.

<sup>26</sup> Alvord, C. W., "Kaskaskia Records" in "Illinois Historical Collections," Virginia S., vol. II, pp. 583 and 584.

## CHAPTER 9

### RESULTS OF THE DISCORD

But we must return to the closing years of the Spanish regime in Louisiana to mark the advent on Missouri soil of two priests faithful unto death: Father Pierre Gibault as Pastor of New Madrid and the Post of Arkansas, and Father Paul de Saint Pierre as Pastor of Ste. Genevieve and of Point Couppee in the South.

How these two faithful priests came to serve the Church under the Spanish regime must now be explained in proper detail.

During Father Paul de Saint Pierre's incumbency of Cahokia, the people had requested that the Bishop of Quebec should ratify appointment of their present pastor as a missionary also for the Tamarois Indians.

The Bishop's response is not known, yet the request did not seem to be out of harmony with the views of Bishop Hubert, who, October 1788, declares that the Seminary had "resigned its prerogative of nominating a superior among the Tamarois only in favor of the Bishop of Quebec," a right which seems to have been exercised for the last time when the saintly Father Francis Savine came to Cahokia in 1812.

Father de Saint Pierre remained at Cahokia until September 1789, as pastor and missionary, and the parish began to revive and flourish under his fostering care.

Good order and decency in all things pertaining to the religious life were always the object of his vigilant care, and he did not hesitate to employ force, even to the extent of calling on the civil power, whenever it seemed necessary. In the minutes of the Court of Cahokia we find a number of instances,

On December 10, 1786, M. de Saint Pierre, the parish priest, presented the petition, requesting the prohibition of giving strong drink to the savages. The Court decreed that "the ordinance passed heretofore shall be published next Sunday and that offenders shall be punished according to said ordinance."

In March of the following year the pastor, de Saint Pierre, required an oath from every member of the Board of Trustees assembled in the presence of the court, that none of them had taken and hidden certain valuable papers entrusted to them by M. Du Buque. All took the oath and were declared free from suspicion.

In all the French settlements of the Mississippi Valley, the so-called *coutumes de Paris* (the customs of Paris) were regarded as the com-

mon law of the land, even in what was afterward called Spanish Louisiana. According to these customs the parish priest had a right to the tithes, originally one-tenth part of the harvest, but now, according to Canadian modification, only one twenty-sixth part, or about 4, instead of 10 per cent of the wheat and corn. Besides this, every family in its turn was required to furnish the *pain bénit*, the blessed bread, of which every one attending the solemn service received a small piece.

This custom of the *pain bénit* was probably introduced by St. Gregory of Tours and prevailed in Canada and several dioceses of France as late as thirty years ago, but seems now to be passing in *desuetudinem* everywhere.

On January 2, 1789, de Saint Pierre entered suit against some inhabitants of Cahokia on account of their refusal to furnish the *pain bénit*. They in turn claimed there was no obligation. The court, however, was impressed by the pastor's arguments, and declared that the obligation held, and ordered these refractory inhabitants to give the blessed bread, each in his turn, on the days of obligation; in default whereof they were to pay ten livres to the church to make up the deficiency.<sup>1</sup>

P. de Saint Pierre was certainly a valiant defender of the rights of the Church, and as such we shall see him again in his new field of labor beyond the great river, in Ste. Genevieve. Cahokia had, indeed, grown dear to his heart; but he felt, at the same time, that there were other places that offered a far better field for his priestly labors. The Spanish side, with its great possibilities under Catholic rule, seemed to say: Come. And then, there was another reason that weighed heavy in the balance, the spirit of restlessness that had taken possession of his own people.

Although Father Gibault did openly take a prominent part in effecting the bloodless conquest of the Illinois country by the Americans under Clark, and although the Creole inhabitants considered a ready submission to the new regime not only a matter of necessity, but also of advantage, they did not have a very deep love for the newcomers: nor could it be justly expected of them. Sudden changes in the administration of a country are always bound to bring certain hardships. So it was in the frontier-towns of the American Bottom. The Virginia troops had withdrawn; no authority had been established; disorder and lawlessness was in full sway, Cahokia alone making an exception to this by establishing a court of justice. The Creoles were offended by the overbearing ways and rude manners of many of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the article on "Bread, Its Liturgical Use," in the "Catholic Encyclopedia." Also the article on "Blessed Bread in Detroit," in "The American Catholic Historical Researches," vol. XII, p. 176.

adventurers from the East, and in their native candour and honesty found themselves exposed on all sides to fraud, injustice and even violence. In consequence many of the most important Creole families left their old homes for Ste. Genevieve or St. Louis. The government beyond the river was, indeed, Spanish; but the people, the laws and customs, and even the officers were French. Besides, the Spanish government was making strong efforts to draw the remnants of the Catholic population to the western shore. Land grants were offered to all newcomers. For this purpose of attracting the people other enticing offers were made to the missionaries of the east side, and they found a ready acceptance.

On May 1, 1787, Father de Saint Pierre had addressed the following petition to Bishop Cyrillo, asking for the appointment to some parish on the Spanish side.

MY LORD:

Three years ago, Mr. Cruzat asked you to give me the parish of Ste. Genevieve, but as he told me, his letters reached you too late, and Rev. Father Louis (Guignes) had obtained the parish.

Knowing that this same parish is vacant since Fall, I ask you humbly for the favor. Already some of my parishioners, for good reasons, have established themselves on your side of the river, and I hope that the others will soon follow them; therefore I beg you to allow me to follow them also.

A new establishment (New Madrid) has been begun a little below the entrance of the Beautiful River. They will need a priest who knows English and German. I offer myself also for this place. You may dispose of me according to your pleasure and good will.

I take the liberty to send you a copy of my papers, legalized by the Commandant of Ste. Genevieve, to convince you of the falsehoods that have been spread about me, and of which Mr. Cruzat has already informed you.

Finally, I will try to act in such a manner that you will never regret to have granted me the favor which I humbly beg of you.

During my whole life I shall be with profoundest respect, Monsignor, your humble and obedient servant,

PAUL DE ST. PIERRE,

*Discalced Carmelite of Germany, Missionary.*

Kaokias, May 1, 1787.<sup>2</sup>

This request was now granted by Bishop Cirillo, and Father de Saint Pierre entered upon his duties of pastor of St. Genevieve in 1789. Father Le Dru of Kaskaskia had preceded him in becoming Pastor of

---

<sup>2</sup> The original is in French and can be found in the Catholic Archives of America, Notre Dame, Indiana.

St. Louis as successor to P. Bernard de Limpach, and Father Gibault followed soon after, accepting a call to New Madrid in 1792, where he built the first church and dedicated it to St. Isidore.

Ste. Genevieve remained the home of Father de Saint Pierre until February 27, 1797, a period of about seven years.

As a further cause of this change of allegiance the circumstance is given that the Creoles of the American Bottom no longer showed a willingness to render the usual tithes for the support of the Church. Under American rule there was, of course, no law to enforce the payment of the tithes.

On the Spanish side the legal obligation was, indeed, cancelled by decree of April 22, 1787, but the practice was still in force among the people and tolerated by the authorities. This source of income was an important matter to a parish priest, though the proceeds varied according to time and place. Father Gibault in 1769 received from the people of Ste. Genevieve about 300 bushels of wheat and 500 to 600 bushels of corn; P. Bernard, however, reports that the tithes received at St. Louis never amounted to more than \$80.00 a year. Yet, important as the tithes were, there was a still more important source of income, granted by the Spanish and denied by the American authorities—a regular salary of \$600.00. With this assured income and the usual perquisites, a parish priest under the Spanish regime need not trouble himself about his temporal support.

It was in the month of September 1789, that Father de Saint Pierre returned to Ste. Genevieve. On the 13th day of September he performed his first official function, the baptism of a child, and he remained as pastor until 1797.

He established his home with a few slaves, who kept house and managed the farm for him. In 1790 the negro woman Fanchonette, whom he had obtained out of the estate of Pierre Langlois at Kaskaskia, was sold by him to Tropez Richard for \$275.00; and on his departure from Ste. Genevieve in 1797 two other slaves were sold by him. All this may seem strange to us, yet slavery was then a universal institution in these regions.

Ever since the great flood in 1785, Old Ste. Genevieve, with its church of St. Joachim, declined; its very site rapidly disappearing in the river. For a time, divine service was held in a temporary structure in the new settlement, whilst preparations were under way for the removal or reconstruction of the church.

In 1793, September 7, the Lieutenant Governor, Zenon Trudeau, came to Ste. Genevieve at the request of Father de Saint Pierre and assembled the inhabitants for the purpose of submitting the project of erecting a new church in the place “where they had sought refuge from

the flood."<sup>3</sup> The plan was heartily approved by the inhabitants of the new village, Petite Cote, as it was called; but the people of the neighboring village of New Bourbon also asked for the erection of a chapel. The parish meeting decided that both villages, although only three miles apart, should have churches of their own. Messrs. Lachance, Pratte and Bolduc were appointed syndics to apportion the burdens of the building costs according to the financial abilities of the inhabitants, and the same gentlemen were approved as supervisors of the building operations.<sup>4</sup>

It was ordered that the material of the old building should be used, as far as possible, for the new church in Ste. Genevieve.

On August 31, 1794, Zenon Trudeau made definite choice of the spot for placing the church in the new village and gave orders that it be built, pledging the government's share of the costs.

The new church of Ste. Genevieve was a wooden structure, similar to the old church at Cahokia, and remained standing, though for a time disused, until 1831, when it was torn down to make room for other purposes.

From the Memoranda of Benedict Roux, we gather that P. Paul de Saint Pierre on two occasions attended to the spiritual needs of desolate Kaskaskia (May 1785-June 1786; and February 1792-December 1796). Ste. Genevieve, however, remained his home and regular charge.<sup>5</sup>

A number of very interesting reminiscences of the days of Father de Saint Pierre are given in Henry Brackenridge's *Recollections of the West*. Brackenridge had, as a boy, been sent to Ste. Genevieve for his education at the parish school and had found a new, most pleasant home with the family of Vital Beauvais. It is a graphic account that the grateful author gives of the peaceful, joyous and sincerely religious family life in the days before the coming of the Americans. Madame Beauvais, especially, is a most admirable Catholic woman. She loved the little Brackenridge as if he had been her own; but she could not bear the thought, that he, an unbaptized child, should share the bed with her own children. She therefore had him baptized by Father de Saint Pierre to make her happiness complete.

<sup>3</sup> Original documents in the Archives of the Missouri Historical Society.

<sup>4</sup> Ste. Genevieve Archives. From a letter of P. de Saint Pierre, we learn that the proposed chapel in New Bourbon had not been started in January 1796, when Father de Saint Pierre wrote: "The three hundred dollars the governor does not wish to have delivered until the chapel at New Bourbon is built. This chapel, in my opinion, will do more harm and cause more disorder than the amount is worth; but let the inhabitants decide."

<sup>5</sup> Ste. Genevieve Archives, at Jefferson Memorial, St. Louis.

The little English boy, *le petit anglais*, as they called him, was now admitted to the dignity of an altar-boy, and as such he received a larger portion of the *pain bénit*, the blessed bread, which however, he did not eat, but brought as a choice morsel to his favorite, the baby of the family. Many years afterwards, on a chance visit to Ste. Genevieve, he came just in time to witness the marriage of this early friend of his childhood. Brackenridge also speaks of the many religious festivals and processions, of the Sunday High Mass and Vespers, by which the spiritual life of the people was constantly renewed, and he dwells with deep feeling on the innocent pleasures and simple pastimes of the dreamy village, in the good old days of Father de Saint Pierre.<sup>6</sup>

The curé enjoyed the love and respect of all. Of course, there were exceptions. Even in peaceful Ste. Genevieve there were crooked ways that had to be made straight, and proud wills that had to be broken. The Ste. Genevieve Archives, now in charge of the Missouri Historical Society, preserve a letter of de Saint Pierre, parish priest, to Don Francisco Vallé, the Commandant of the district, dated August 8, 1796, in which he expresses his deep regret that one of his parishioners, living in open sin, would not heed his voice, and now he calls up the Commandant "for a judgment and punishment. The person whom the said Louis Coyteux has in his house, pretends throughout the parish that she is his wife and he calls her so. I implore your aid in order that you may, by force, make her leave his house; and in order to put an end to the scandal, forbid her taking up her residence too near that of the said Coyteux. In case he should show resistance, it will be necessary to enforce the law made by our Monarch, December 24th, 1787, which may be found, no doubt, in your record office, or in the archives of St. Louis; for it was made public not long ago."

The decision of the Commandant was given on the 31st. of August, 1796: "Don Francois Vallé, Captain of Militia and Civil and Military Commandant of the Post of Ste. Genevieve of the Illinois and its dependencies.

Upon the oft repeated petitions made to us by the Sieur de St. Pierre, curé of this parish, asking that a stop be put to the public scandal resulting from the cohabitation of Mr. Louis Coyteux, resident of this post, with an English woman, whom he has had at his home, for a long time, which is contrary to good morals, also to the ordinances of his Majesty.

We, the aforesaid Commandant, do order Mr. Louis Coyteux to eject from his house the said English woman, and that within twenty-

---

6 Brackenridge, "Recollections of the West," passim.

four hours after being notified of the order, under penalty of being prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Executed at Ste. Genevieve. August 31, 1796, before noon.

(Signed FCOIS VALLE.<sup>77</sup>)

The vexed question as to the tithes also came up once more in the same year, 1796. How it was settled we cannot say. Here is the letter of P. de Saint Pierre to one of his confreres, probably Father Bernard of St. Louis:

"There is a difficulty between the Sacristan of this parish and a married soldier who keeps his home separately in his own house. The Sacristan asks 39 litres of wheat for the beadle according to the custom of the parish and again as much for himself annually. The soldier refuses to pay. I believe the soldier is obliged to pay since he has his house and family outside military quarters. The beadle told me that the commanding officer holds a different opinion.

I wish to be well informed before I speak to him and I ask you to tell me what is customary in your parish, and if you can, inquire from the Lieutenant Governor himself. If the officers of the regiment who reside in their own houses in the capital are obliged to support public works, I am sure that the soldiers in Illinois or any other garrison should be equally obliged.

Your most obedient servant,

PAUL DE SAINT PIERRE.<sup>78</sup>

As Father de Saint Pierre, by his long and faithful service, had firmly established himself in the affection of his people, it was a great shock to them to hear that their good pastor had been recalled. Gone from Ste. Genevieve he certainly was, since December 1795, and no one knew whither he had gone. All the old rumors, so long asleep, woke up suddenly and set about their ugly business. The ancient story of the conflict with Bishop Carroll and his long-departed Vicar-General, De La Valinière, had taken on a new lease of life. The truth was that Father de Saint Pierre had quietly undertaken a journey to Baltimore in order to settle this very matter for good, as we learn from a letter found in the Archives of the Missouri Historical Society. In accordance with this fact, we find the name of de Saint Pierre is wanting in the Records of Ste. Genevieve from December 3, 1795, to May 22, 1796. In its stead we find for January and February, 1796, the name of Pierre Joseph Didier, Parish Priest of Saint Charles; in March, Pierre Janin of St. Louis; in April Didier once more, and in May, Jacques Maxwell, the new Vicar-General. On the 27th day of May, 1796, P. de

<sup>77</sup> Ste. Genevieve Archives.

<sup>78</sup> "American Catholic Historical Researches," January 1898, p. 11. A litre is 1.76 pints.

Saint Pierre returned to Ste. Genevieve. The journey to Baltimore had occupied about six months, the time of his absence from the parish. The letter we referred to is addressed to Don Francois Vallé, the Commandant of Ste. Genevieve under date of New Orleans, January 20, 1796:

“MY DEAR FRIEND:

I must inform you of the atrocious calumnies that are being circulated in regard to me:

1. That the Bishop of Baltimore had forbidden me all sacerdotal functions within his jurisdiction.
2. That I had performed them during an entire year without his orders.
3. That he had finally driven me from the American Illinois and ordered that his parish priests should have all my jurisdictional functions done over again.

I at once asked that I be informed of the authors of these calumnies; but they are being hidden from me, I do not know for what reason. At the same time, I asked permission to be allowed to go in person to see the Bishop of Baltimore on this subject. This permission was given me, with the very highest testimonial regarding my conduct, which, it said, was altogether above reproach during the time that I officiated as parish priest with you, and an appeal to the Bishop was added at the same time, that he pronounce judgment on the above mentioned charges.

According to these false reports it was believed that I had abandoned my duties as parish priest without having reported to my superiors. In this belief, before my arrival here (in New Orleans), another priest was sent in my place. In conformity with my promises made to the inhabitants I shall not accept any other parish than that of Ste. Genevieve. I was assured that it would be reserved for me, and that orders would be issued to the afore-mentioned priest to go farther on.

Upon my return to your town, I, on my part, promised to clear myself, with the high testimonial of the Bishop of Baltimore, of the calumnies made against me and to show the falseness of the alleged articles. This step did not cost me anything, as I had been engaged to take the trip by sea for reasons known to you.

Be kind enough to present my respects to your wife and give my love to all of your family for me. Say to my friends and all the parishioners that I appreciate highly their affection, and that I am absolutely unalterable in the resolutions and promises which I made, of not accepting any other parish than theirs, and that I absent myself from them, only to justify myself against the calumnies of wicked tongues, that I may remain with them for a longer and more peaceful period. Beg them also to cherish, assist and satisfy, in every possible way, the priest who

will be sent in my place, and present my respect to him, and say that whatever I have is at his service and at his disposal, so as to make his stay agreeable."

But the days of Father de Saint Pierre as Pastor of Ste. Genevieve were already numbered. Father James Maxwell, an Irish priest, who had made his studies at Salamanca, had arrived just before de Saint Pierre's return from Baltimore, in May 1796. Father Maxwell came as Grand Vicar of the Bishop of Santiago de Cuba and took up his residence in New Bourbon, whilst de Saint Pierre for a time continued his priestly ministrations at Ste. Genevieve. Two priests, in what was practically one parish, could not exist and would not subserve the best interests of religion. Father de Saint Pierre, though not removed, had to leave. The old militant spirit bowed to the acknowledged authority of the new-comer. On the second day of January 1797, a public auction was held, at which the former pastor's lot of ground with house and barn, and all pertaining thereto, two slaves included, were sold to the highest bidders. The property is described as fronting on the Rue de l'Eglise, and bounded on the one side by the home of John B. Valle, and the homes of Augustin Aubuchon and John B. Lalumandière on the other. The amount realized was 1600 pesetos or dollars, payable either in money, or lead and peltry. The last entry of Father de Saint Pierre in the Baptismal Record of Ste. Genevieve was on February 27, 1797. What his immediate destination was we could not discover; probably the capital of the Province, New Orleans. Did he retire for a time from active service, or did he perhaps make a visit to the old home across the sea? The monasteries in France were abolished long since. In his native land he was forgotten. America had become his true home. But what was his later course? After the erection of the diocese of New Orleans in 1799, with Msgr. Louis Peñalver y Cárdenas as its first bishop, we catch a glimpse once more of Father de Saint Pierre in Natchez. The historian, John Gilmary Shea, in one of his letters to Chancellor Van der Sanden speaks of a voluminous document in Spanish, preserved in the diocesan Archives of Baltimore; a kind of record of trial under Bishop Peñalver of Father de Saint Pierre for breaches of discipline. The outcome of this trial must not have been unfavorable to the much buffeted missionary.

In any case he was one of the four priests of the twenty-six in all Louisiana, who, according to the statement of the Administrator, Rev. Thomas Hassett, December 23, 1803, "agreed to remain in their respective stations under the French government," and in consequence he received the appointment as Pastor of St. Gabriel's, Iberville, a parish on both sides of the Mississippi, "rather difficult to attend but also very lucrative," as a contemporary writes. Here Father de Saint Pierre labored

with great, no longer "unmanageable" zeal and success, and until his death, October 15, 1826, fully twenty-two years.

Father Laval, in his notes transmitted to John Gilmary Shea, praises Father de Saint Pierre as "one of the most remarkable priests that ever administered St. Gabriel's church." "During his time," he says, "the church was removed from its former place on the bank of the Mississippi to where it now stands, the river having swept away the bank in front of it in 1717."

At St. Gabriel's Father de Saint Pierre, the last representative of the old regime, received the visit of Father Francis Cellini, one of the earliest followers of Bishop Du Bourg, who in his letter dated September 30, 1822, styled him "le brave et bon de Saint Pierre." Bishop Rosati never paid the old lion the honor of a visit.

On September 23, Father Anthony Blanc of Baton Rouge, informed Bishop Rosati that he had administered the last sacraments to the pastor of Iberville. De Saint Pierre, whom he regularly styles, "the Old Man," being in his eighty-first year, could not, in all probability, survive the illness. The parish itself, he added, was in a flourishing condition. The older people attended High Mass and the Sunday Vespers with greatest regularity and devotion. Because the parish had for so many years enjoyed a well-ordered pastoral care, it would be advisable to appoint a successor immediately after the death of de Saint Pierre, or even during his lifetime; in the latter case, the successor might reside at Baton Rouge. The "Old Man" would not have an assistant. The bishop, suggests Father Blanc, might appoint a Lazarist, or Father Michaud, who was *fatigue et degoute souverainement du service a la paroisse de N. Orleans*. There was another reason for this undignified haste. The "Old Man" himself had provided the necessity for an early appointment. There was a clause in the good Father's Last Will bequeathing all his property, valued by Father Blanc at about \$6,000.00, exclusive of two slaves, furniture, cattle, etc., to his successor. Another clause ordained that "the priest who should officiate at his burial was to be the administrator of his estate, two laymen to assist him." Father Michaud received the appointment immediately after the death of the testator, and Father Anthony Blanc performed the last rites of the church over the remains of his friend and neighbor. P. Paul de Saint Pierre had found rest eternal. *Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum*, his memory still lives as one of the most remarkable men of our early western days.

For Father Pierre Gilbault, also, there was no place any longer in Bishop Carroll's diocese, of which Cahokia now formed a part.

The Spanish authorities, however were glad to secure the services of such a distinguished priest. The rising town of New Madrid, together with the old settlement Arkansas Post, were assigned to him, and they

enjoy the honor of having received Father Gibaults' last ministrations. The site where New Madrid was now in process of building, L'Anse a la Graise, lay on the great Indian trail to the North and West. It had all the advantages necessary for a good trading post. Strange to say, this Catholic town with a proud Spanish name owes its origin to an Anglo-American and a Protestant at that, Colonel George Morgan, a native of New Jersey and a graduate of Princeton. Trader, judge, Indian agent and soldier of distinction, Colonel Morgan was with O'Rielly's fleet, when the Spaniards took possession of Louisiana (1769). In a memorial addressed to the Spanish Ambassador Don Diego Gardoqui, Morgan proposed to establish a colony near the mouth of the Ohio, the Beautiful River, as it was then called, in territory then belonging to the Spanish crown, in which he promised he would have at least one hundred thousand souls within ten years. But two conditions were laid down by Morgan; the settlers should have the right of self government, and should be exempt from taxation. Gardoqui granted the concession, subject, however, to the approval of the King. The grant embraced from twelve to fifteen million acres of land along the Mississippi from the mouth of the St. Francis River in Arkansas, to Cape St. Cosme in Perry County, Missouri. In order to gain settlers for his principality, Morgan made extensive trips among the Germans of Pennsylvania, of whom he wrote to Don Diego, that these people have been a valuable acquisition "to America. . . A greater number of them than I expected to find, are Catholics." Upon his new followers the doughty Colonel impressed the fact, that they would enjoy perfect freedom in religious matters . . . and would make converts of the whole country."

On the 14th of February, 1789, Morgan and his followers reached the Mississippi River and landed opposite the mouth of the Ohio. Leaving the main party in what is now Mississippi County, Morgan, with a few companions, journeyed by land to St. Louis, and on his return he selected the site for the future city of New Madrid, the capital of his principality. In a letter dated New Madrid, April 14, 1789, the colonists give a very interesting account of the virgin land to which they have come, and the grand prospects before them.

This circular letter in behalf of Morgan's foundation was first printed in the *Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, of August 27, 1789. Morgan caused sufficient land for 350 farms of 320 acres each to be surveyed and to be divided among settlers, who should come on or before May 1, 1790, the settlers to take the oath of allegiance to the King of Spain, and to pay forty-eight American dollars for each farm. It was expected that every succeeding year would add at least a thousand families to the colony. As Houck tells us: "In New Madrid lots were dedicated to the use of the Roman Catholic church and school, Episcopal church and

school, Presbyterian and German Lutheran church and school, and German Catholic church and school."<sup>9</sup>

The grand plan was frustrated in a very large measure by the machinations of Governor Estevan Miro, who succeeded in having the concession cancelled, and the new city put under Spanish administration. Colonel Morgan retired to his Manor Morganza in Pennsylvania. Some of the settlers moved to Little Prairie and elsewhere. Yet a steady stream of colonists, from the states beyond the Mississippi set in, especially from Vincennes and the French royalist settlement of Gallipolis. At first the new settlement was placed under the jurisdiction of Henri Peyroux, Commandant of Ste. Genevieve. In July 1789, Governor Miro dispatched Lieutenant Pierre Foucher with a small company of soldiers to build a fort at New Madrid and to take civil and military command of the place. New colonists came pouring in day by day. "All our Americans of Port Vincennes will go to Morgan," wrote Major Hamtramck, in 1789, and "within twenty days not less than a hundred souls have passed daily to the colony." Foucher was succeeded as Commandant by Thomas Portelle, September 1791. So far the great majority of the settlers were Creoles and French.<sup>10</sup>

What we have written here, concerns more the rising town of New Madrid than the Catholic church established there. But Governor Estevan Miro, whilst antagonizing the founder of New Madrid, helped to found the church in the new settlement. A Catholic church and priest were considered essential to the well being of any Spanish settlement. But first a priest must be had. There were two applicants for the position: Father Paul de Saint Pierre, the German Carmelite Missionary, wrote from Cahokia to his Bishop in New Orleans on May 1, 1787. "A new establishment has been begun a little below the entrance of the Beautiful River. They will need a priest who knows English and German. I offer myself for this place. You may dispose of me according to your pleasure and good will."<sup>11</sup> The German Carmelite received the appointment, not to New Madrid, but to old Ste. Genevieve, whilst the so-called "patriot priest of the West," Pierre Gibault, was called to New Madrid, where he received the appointment as pastor of the Parish church of Saint Isidore in 1793. But Gibault's spiritual labors in New Madrid began much sooner, probably in 1789, when he left Cahokia. This Parish of New Madrid, included the dependencies of Arkansas Post and Little Prairie, which latter village was founded by Francois Le Sieur, in 1797, whilst Arkansas

---

<sup>9</sup> Houck, Louis, "The Spanish Regime in Missouri," gives a re-translation from the Spanish version. The original English appeared in the "Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser," August 27, 1789.

<sup>10</sup> The Catholic Germans who had been expected to come on from Pennsylvania did not respond in large numbers.

<sup>11</sup> Catholic Archives, Notre Dame.

Post dates back to the days of Saint Cosme and his companions. Father Gibault administered the sacraments of the church in Arkansas Post as early as October 8, 1792, and signed himself as "Curé élu de la Nouvelle Madrid," parish priest-elect of New Madrid, that is, his election was not as yet confirmed by episcopal authority. But on July 11, 1793, he first signs an entry of marriage, "P. Gibault per nous Pretre, Curé de la Nouvelle Madrid." From this it follows that Father Gibault attended New Madrid and its dependencies since his departure from Cahokia in 1791. and became the first canonical pastor of New Madrid in 1793.

The immediate reason for Father Gibault's change to the Spanish jurisdiction and civil allegiance is to be sought in two facts: that he was no longer welcome in the diocese of Bishop Carroll of Baltimore, whose claim to all the territory of the United States was now acknowledged, and that he was not allowed to return to his home in Canada on account of his political activities in Kaskaskia and Vincennes. An offer from Catholic Spain was therefore most acceptable, especially, as he knew the various older French settlements on the Spanish side of the river. It is certain that Father Gibault took the oath of allegiance to His Most Christian Majesty<sup>12</sup> and that he attained some real successes in his new field of labor.

Spiritually, he was now under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Louisiana and Florida, represented in Upper Louisiana by the Vicar-General James Maxwell residing in Ste. Genevieve. As pastor he received a salary of 600 dollars from the Government, in addition to the perquisites which were fixed by royal ordinance. He succeeded in 1799 to obtain the consent of his parishioners as well as of the Intendant Morales to build a church in New Madrid, dedicated to St. Isidore. The church was an edifice 60 feet long, 28 feet wide and 16 feet high between ground and ceiling. "The carpenter work," says the report of the commissioners, "is constructed of cypress timber, covered on the outside with planks of the same wood. It has a partition in the width for the sacristy, ten openings with their windows and gratings, an altar with tabernacle of cherry-wood, a picture of the Holy Virgin Mary eight feet high by five and one-half feet wide, framed in wood, a belfry with a metal bell weighing fifty pounds," which was estimated to be worth 1200 pesos. The parish residence was a building 21 feet by 16 feet wide, rather small according to modern ideas of comfort. It was, as Houck tells us, doubled without and within with cypress planks, the floor and ceiling and a partition wall of cypress planks, a double brick chimney, four openings with their windows and doors and gratings, a gallery in front, with floors and ceilings, a cellar under said house and a stairway to mount the garret. In addition to this parish residence was a kitchen 18 feet long by 15 feet wide

---

<sup>12</sup> Houck, "The Spanish Regime in Missouri," vol. I, p. 336.

and also a bake house 15 feet long and 10 feet wide and over 30 feet in circumference, with frames complete, made of brick, and a roof of carpenter work and this bake house was equipped with all the utensils necessary for baking, all valued at 120 pesos.<sup>13</sup>

In this parochial residence, surrounded by a large garden, Father Gibault lived in ease and comfort with his colored servants well able to entertain the Vicar-General of Upper Louisiana, Father Maxwell, who would occasionally ride down from Ste. Genevieve for a brief visit, unless he himself were absent on a more or less laborious journey to his stations along the river as far as Arkansas Post to the South and Tywappity Bottom to the North. As Stoddard in his *Louisiana* informs us, the expense of building and furnishing the church was paid by the Government, although Father Maxwell insists that the well-to-do inhabitants are obliged, under the laws of the Kingdom to contribute to the construction of the church.

It was a subscription sufficiently meagre as we can judge from Francisco Miranda's Report on the church furnishings he found in St. Isidore's church of New Madrid in 1805, as recorded by Houck in his *Spanish Regime in Missouri*.

During the Spanish regime the Catholic religion was the only one tolerated in Louisiana: yet the authorities recognized a certain liberty of conscience. On March 29, 1797, the Governor Don Manuel Gayoso de Lemos issued a Proclamation from which the following is an extract: "The misconstruction of what is meant by the enjoyment of the liberty of conscience is hereby removed by explaining it precisely to be, that no individual of this government, shall be molested on account of religious principles, and that they shall not be hindered in their private meetings; but no other public worship shall be allowed, but that generally established in all His Majestys dominions which is the Catholic religion."<sup>14</sup> The occasion for the proclamation was an incident that happened in New Madrid on June 9, 1797. An itinerant Baptist minister of the name of Hannah, had, at the request of Mr. Andrew Elliot, the U. S. Commissioner General for Determining the Boundary of the Spanish Possessions, who was then the Governor's guest, obtained permission to preach a sermon in Mr. Elliot's camp, near New Madrid, with the restriction that he should not touch on political topics. The announcement of a Protestant sermon, being a new thing in the country, drew together a very large audience. "The preacher being a weak man was extremely puffed up with the attentions he received on that occasion, which were more from the novelty of the case than his own merit and talent, and paved the way for a commotion which took place a few days after. . . . The minister had

---

<sup>13</sup> Houck, op. cit., vol. II, p. 351.

with enthusiastic zeal, which was a little heightened by liquor, entered into religious controversy in a disorderly part of the town, generally inhabited at that time by Irish Roman Catholics, who took offense as the manner in which he treated the tenets of their church and in revenge gave him a beating. He immediately called upon the Governor, and in a presumptive manner demanded justice; threatening at the same time to do it for himself, if his request was not complied with. The Governor, with more patience and good temper than ordinary, advised him to reflect a few minutes, and then repeat his request, which the Preacher did in the same words, accompanied with a threat. Upon which the Governor immediately ordered him to be committed to the prison, which was within the Fort, and his legs to be placed in the stocks."<sup>14</sup>

This vivid picture from the Journal of Andrew Elliot, showing that a part of Father Gibault parishioners were of the militant kind, derives additional interest from the fact that at that very time Father James Maxwell, the Vicar General, was with the Spanish Commandant at New Madrid, being described by Elliot in his Journal, as "a Clergyman of Rome, a Native of Ireland, of the name of Maxwell, a well informed liberal gentleman, who acted as interpreter."

Mr. Houck<sup>15</sup> gives the substance of a few official letters written by Maxwell to Gibault, saying that it appears from them that the Parish Priest of New Madrid and its dependencies was altogether too lenient in the matter of demanding the usual offerings for the dispensations granted, especially from the proclamation of the bans, to which fees the Vicar General, or rather his Chancery, was entitled. "In one letter," writes Houck, "dated October 1801, which has been preserved in the New Madrid Archives, Father Maxwell severely reprimanded him for performing a ceremony between a Mr. Randall and Miss Sara Waller, the latter being a minor, without the consent of her father and mother, both being residents of the Cape Girardeau district," that is within Father Maxwell's own parish limits. From this it is evident that Father Gibault was still among the living and, at that, in New Madrid, at the close of 1801, although not in very excellent standing with his spiritual superiors.

It appears from the New Madrid Records that Father Gibault was not at New Madrid after March 29, 1804, for during a period of eight months, March 19, 1804—Nov. 28, 1804, the Commandant Juan Lavalley assists at and certifies to the marriages contracted at New Madrid. From Nov. 28, 1804 Father Leander Lusson, the Pastor of St. Charles, performs this office as the New Madrid Records bear witness,<sup>16</sup> until December 9, 1804. From that date on until April 15, 1806, marriages are contracted before the civil magistrate.

<sup>14</sup> "Elliot's Journal," pp. 65 and 66.

<sup>15</sup> Houck's "History of Missouri," vol. II, pp. 302.

<sup>16</sup> "New Madrid Archives," vol. VIII, p. 470-487.

This seems to be the last documentary trace we have about the storm-tossed man and servant of Holy Church. John Gilmary Shea, in his *History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, says that both Fathers John Olivier and Gabriel Richard had written to Bishop Carroll of Baltimore that Father Pierre Gibault, one time Vicar General of the Bishop of Quebec in the Illinois Country, had died at New Madrid in 1804. These letters are said to be in the archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. There are some who say that Gibault returned to Canada after 1801 or 1802, and died there probably in 1804. But this point remains doubtful. The transfer of Louisiana and with it of New Madrid, to the United States, was consummated by Laussat in behalf of France, on December 29, 1803. It may be that Father Gibault did not live to see the great change, in the preparation of which he had been such an important actor in his Kaskaskia days under General George Rogers Clark. It is even doubtful whether he would have welcomed the change to American sovereignty of what had once been the proud possession of his own race. In any case it must be remembered that Father Gibault was first and all the time an humble, laborious and enthusiastic servant of God's Kingdom, the Church, and that his chief business was not empire building, but the salvation of souls. Indeed, he had in himself but little of the warrior-patriot, as some have lovingly described him. It was through circumstances over which he had no control, but whose control he readily accepted, that this simple priest and missionary was elevated to the exalted position of one of the three founders of the Republic in the West.<sup>17</sup>

Father Gibault appears as the connecting link between the old glorious Jesuit mission period in Illinois and the still more glorious development of the church in the Mississippi Valley. Touching the hand of the last of the Jesuits, Father Sebastian Meurin, he trained for the priesthood that noble scion of Ste. Genevieve, Father Henri Pratte, who was to welcome to the wild but promising West, the pioneer bishop William Du Bourg and his little army of missionaries in 1818.

---

<sup>17</sup> Clark, Vigo and Gibault, cf. Judge Law's "Colonial History of Vincennes," p. 55.

## THE SULPICIAN IN THE ILLINOIS COUNTRY

After the Diocese of Baltimore had been officially extended to the Mississippi River, the duty of Bishop Carroll to provide priests for the long forsaken Missions and Parishes, Cahokia, Kaskaskia, Prairie Du Rocher and Vincennes, became imperative. He was fortunate to obtain from Paris a number of very excellent members of the Sulpician Congregation, some for his new seminary at Baltimore, others for the western missions. Among the latter were, besides the future Bishops of Bardstown, Flaget and David, the Fathers Michael Levadoux, Jean Francois Rivet and Gabriel Richard. These priests were assigned as follows: Levadoux to Cahokia, Rivet to Vincennes, Richard to Prairie du Rocher, and the secular priest, Pierre Janin, to Kaskaskia. Only Rivet and Janin had Indian Missions.

The first Sulpician to accept the position of a shepherd of souls<sup>1</sup> in the old Illinois missionary field, and, for that matter, in the United States, was the saintly Benedict Joseph Flaget. Born December 7, 1763, at Contournat, in the Auvergne, he became a member of the Congregation of St. Sulpice in November 1783, and pursued his theological studies at Issy, near Paris, under Father Gabriel Richard, as Superior. The revolution, that swept away so many of the monuments of French piety, learning and art, drove the young priest away from home to America, in company of the Sulpician Fathers Chicoisneau and David, and the sub-deacon, Stephen Theodor Badin.

The missionaries reached Philadelphia on March 29, 1792. The youthful Flaget was immediately sent as pastor to the old French settlement on the Wabash, Vincennes,<sup>2</sup> where he arrived a few days before

---

<sup>1</sup> The Congregation of St. Sulpice was intended for Seminary work. Missionary activity was assigned to them at the request of Bishop Carroll.

<sup>2</sup> Since the days of the early Jesuits the Church of Vincennes has maintained intimate relations with the French Catholics along the Mississippi. Father Mermet, the Jesuit from Kaskaskia, was its first priest. Then came the heroic Father Senat, the martyr of duty in the Chicasaw war, and a little later the Jesuits Vivier and Meurin, all members of the Illinois Mission. Father Gibault was the pastor, until his appointment to New Madrid on the Spanish side. On Bishop Du Bourg's assumption of the charge of the Illinois Mission, Vincennes was thrown in for good measure, and two of his best priests, Anthony Blanc and Andrew Ferrari, were sent there to revive the faith. The town on the Wabash was named for the Sieur John Baptist Vincennes whom the Chicasaws burned to death with his friend and companion Father Senat in 1736.

Christmas. What he saw and experienced there among the Indians who had returned to an almost savage life, and the Creoles who had intermarried with the Indians and had adopted many of their ways and manners, was enough to discourage any ordinary man. The church of Father Gibault, a log building, still remained, but in a dilapidated condition; the altar was a primitive construction of a few boards, rudely put together. Yet, the poverty and bareness of his surroundings did not dishearten Father Flaget, though it touched him deeply, reminding him of Bethlehem and its manger. What hurt him much more was the coldness and indifference of his people, of whom only twelve could be moved to approach Holy Communion during the Christmas festivities. Seeing that the way of converting the old was through the plastic hearts of their children, he established a school, in which he taught the rudiments of learning and the principles and practices of religion. A goodly number of the parishioners, Indian and French Creoles, were won over to the almost forgotten Christian practices. But no less did he endeavor to improve the social condition of these poor neglected and persecuted people. He had looms made, and taught the women the art of weaving; he encouraged agriculture and sought to instill habits of industry in the half-savage hunters and trappers.

During Father Flaget's stay at Vincennes, the smallpox visited the people of the town, and the Indians in the neighboring villages, and continued its ravages, though intermittently, for a whole year. With full knowledge of the dangers he incurred, he waited on the afflicted, administered the sacraments and buried the dead. Many among the Miamis and other Indians received Baptism on their death-bed.

With such a lonely life in the wilderness, with no priestly companion within reach, and deprived of all the comforts of cultured society the young missionary bore the "burdens of the day and the heats thereof" most manfully. When he fell sick in October 1793, his vigorous constitution and his never-failing confidence in God soon restored him. But he was destined for higher things, and at the call of his Superiors, he left Vincennes for Baltimore at the end of April 1795.

The disastrous war with the savages at last brought the United States government, not so much to a realization of its duty towards the poor children of forest and prairie, but rather to a clearer estimate of the advantages to be gained by bringing them under religious influences.

President Washington recommended to Congress the adoption of a more helpful treatment of the Indians. Bishop Carroll at once offered the services of Father Rivet, and the offer was accepted. A commission was issued to him as "Missionary to the Indians," with an annual allow-

ance of \$200.00. Father Rivet immediately set out for the Mission of St. Francis Xavier near Vincennes, and arrived there June 12, 1795.<sup>3</sup>

Father Pierre Janin received a similar commission, and came to Kaskaskia in October of the same year. Both found, what Father Rivet had expected from the start, "only trouble, privation and the duty of making every kind of sacrifice." Through the disastrous war the Indians had become savages once more, with the vices of the whites added to their old ones. The French Catholics were apathetic, and the government officials neglected to pay the yearly allowances. Father Janin soon resigned his commission as "Missionary to the Indians" and Pastor of Kaskaskia, to go to St. Louis on the Spanish side. Father Gabriel Richard attended the place from Prairie du Rocher. Fever attacked the newcomers to the American Bottoms. "So far I have had only three attacks of the fever, wrote Father Levadoux from Cahokia, "but they have left me so weak, that I can scarcely keep from falling at every step." "Father Rivet at Vincennes has been more fortunate in this respect. But his Indians were all in winter quarters, and will not be back for a few months." "One great drawback, is that I am still without means, having no interpreter of my own, not knowing the language, having no opportunity to learn it, and being scarcely able to vegetate with the meagre salary given me by the United States. We have not even received a cent of the first quarter of that salary, now that the fourth quarter is due." "The Governor tells us that we have been forgotten."<sup>4</sup>

Discouraging as the care of the Indians was, the experiences Father Rivet had with the French were still more heartrending: "Notwithstanding all my care in a village composed of one hundred and four Catholic families, which number about three hundred, or three hundred and fifty communicants, I had only eighty-eight persons who presented themselves at the tribunal of Penance and forty two at the Holy Table, although my indulgence has been almost excessive."<sup>5</sup> The good Father begs his Bishop to send his people a pastoral letter, especially in regard to "the necessity of sending the children to Catechism, and not to leave them, until the age of thirteen or fourteen, in almost absolute ignorance of all their duties of religion, to take them out of the hands of the priests, as soon as they have made their First Communion."<sup>6</sup> Another common vice, the Father most bitterly condemns, is "the uncontrollable passion for nocturnal dances." The population of our villages is made up of

---

<sup>3</sup> "Rev. John Rivet," by Camillus P. Maes in "Ecclesiastical Review," vol. V, July and August.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p. 45.

people from all over the world,"<sup>7</sup> adds Father Rivet as one of the causes of this almost universal demoralization.

Father Rivet, however regarded himself as primarily a missionary appointed for the savages, and as such he had very noteworthy success. As to Father Rivet's zeal for the salvation of his poor Indian children, Bishop Carroll bears ample testimony: "Father Rivet visits the neighboring Indians and applies himself incessantly in fulfilling the object of his appointment, and disposing them to maintain a friendly temper towards the United States. He is indefatigable in instructing them in the principles of Christianity, and not without success, which however, would be much greater if the traders could be restrained from spoiling the fruits of his labors by the introduction and sale of spirituous liquors. In the discharge of his useful occupations, M. Rivet has undergone much distress. The Indians afford nothing for his subsistence; on the contrary, he is often obliged to share the little he possesses with them."<sup>8</sup>

"God rewarded his zeal," says Father Rivet's biographer, "with abundant spiritual fruit." The Vincennes Registers of Baptisms and Marriages record the wonderful results of his apostolic labors among the Pottowatomies. The other roaming tribes of the plains of the Wabash were not overlooked: Miamis, Shawnees, Charaguis, Piankeshaws, Ouias, Sioux and Kaskaskies, all contributed their share to the harvest of souls."<sup>9</sup> The infidel writer, Volney, on his tour through the West, visited Father Rivet at Vincennes and expressed himself as "well-pleased with the personality of the learned, well-bred and very kind gentleman." He has special praise for Father Rivet's "self-sacrificing efforts for the education of his flock."

On October 14, 1802, Father Rivet alludes to the changes that were going on beyond the Mississippi: "Governor Harrison has given me a hint, that the Government may need my services in Louisiana, whence most of the priests leave, to go within the lines of the domain of the Spanish King (Florida), who offers to continue their pension to all who locate there . . . During my last journey I went to St. Louis, and everybody expressed a desire to have me there. It is probable that the two shores of the Mississippi will form one and the same government with the region where I reside, and in that case, Governor Harrison will be strongly importuned by the people of the other shore, to send me there. Alas, if they knew what I am they would not go to so much trouble."<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p. 47. Among Father Rivet's many other accomplishments we may mention his skill in writing Latin verse. He often exchanged poetic lucubrations with Father Stephen Badin.

<sup>8</sup> Letter to Samuel Dexter, Secretary of War, Sept. 15, 1800.

<sup>9</sup> "Rev. John Rivet," by C. P. Maes, p. 50. We preserve Father Rivet's spelling of these Indian names.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 111.

But Father Rivet's health was breaking fast, and his end was, no doubt, accelerated by extraordinary austerities, as "Sleeping on rough boards covered with a worn-out cloak." Shortly after New Year's Day of 1804 he felt that death was nigh. He sent word to his nearest neighbor, Father Donatien Olivier, at Prairie du Rocher, to come and administer to him the last rites of the Church. Anticipating his coming he wrote out his confession. But Father Olivier was far away, and the dying man sealed his written confession and addressed it to his brother priest. Father Olivier arrived at Vincennes three days after Father Rivet's death. "He died as he had lived, extremely poor and extremely regretted by his parishioners," wrote Father Gabriel Richard, the companion of former days.<sup>11</sup>

Father Michael Levadoux was one of the companions of Father Nagot on the journey to Baltimore in 1791. A year or so after his arrival he and Father Gabriel Richard were sent by Bishop Carroll to the French settlements along the Mississippi. Father Flaget on his way to Vincennes met them at the Falls of the Ohio, now, Louisville. Father Levadoux took up his abode at Cahokia, whilst Richard went to Prairie du Rocher. After the recall of Father Flaget, Father Rivet was sent to Vincennes, and a secular priest, Pierre Janin, to Kaskaskia. Father Levadoux was appointed Vicar General of the district. The Sulpician, John Dilhet, in his Memoir "On the church in the diocese of the United States," says: "M. Levadoux went there (Cahokia), by order of his superiors, the Bishop of Baltimore and M. Nagot, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice at Baltimore. He built a splendid church there, in the vicinity, I do not know where. M. Olivier succeeded him."<sup>12</sup> This testimony of a brother in religion is sufficiently perplexing. Yet it contains a grain of certain truth; the fact that the church at Cahokia was built, at least in part, by Vicar-General Levadoux. As Father Dilhet resided at Detroit with Fathers Levadoux and Richard, he must have had his information from the best sources. What Father Dilhet probably meant, was that Father Levadoux had been sent to the district of Cahokia, and that he built a church there, at a point unknown to the writer. When Father Levadoux was changed from Cahokia to Detroit in 1796, to be succeeded, after an interval of a few years, by Father John Olivier, Father Gabriel Richard attended to the wants of the people of Cahokia, and also to the construction of the church begun by Father Levadoux. Certain it is that the edifice was blessed in 1799 by Vicar-General Rivet, Pastor of Vincennes, who also said

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 121.

<sup>12</sup> Jean Dilhet "Etat De L'Eglise Catholique ou Diocese Des Etats-Unis De L'Amerique Septentrionale," Washington, D. C., 1922. Translated and annotated by the Rev. Patrick William Browne, S. T. D.

the first mass within its walls. This building, still in good condition, though no longer used for church purposes, is the noblest memorial of the Sulpician Fathers in the Mississippi Valley.

The first Church of the Holy Family at Cahokia built by Father St. Cosme at the beginning of the eighteenth century, was probably consumed by fire in 1735. Soon after this disaster the Seminary of Quebec sent Father Nicholas Laurens with 25,000 livres for the purpose of restoring what had been lost or damaged. At this time, no doubt, the second church was erected, which served the parish until that fateful day in November 1762, when Father Forget Du Verger, the last of the Seminary priests, sold all of the mission property, and returned to France. The people of Cahokia were now deprived of everything pertaining to divine worship, except a bell, a monstrance, a chalice and paten and a missal printed in 1668. A house had to be rented in the village where visiting priests might say mass. Father Paul de Saint Pierre, the Carmelite representative of the strenuous life, came to Cahokia in 1786. The people were delighted with their pastor, and built for him a parsonage at a cost of 5,000 livres and started a movement to replace the church, that had meanwhile fallen to pieces. In 1789, however, Father de Saint Pierre left Cahokia for Ste. Genevieve, and the building project lapsed for a time.<sup>13</sup> The "splendid church" must have been begun and almost brought to completion by Father Levadoux, as Father Richard also departed for Detroit in May 1797. Building operations were slow and expensive in those days. The finishing touches were applied under Father Donatien Olivier's regime, so that the building could be dedicated to divine service by the last of the Sulpicians in the Illinois country, Father John Rivet of Vincennes.

This would reconcile the apparent discrepancy in the statements, that the church of Cahokia was built in 1789 and in 1799. The first date marks the inception of the work, the second, however, its completion and dedication. Father Paul de Saint Pierre, the Carmelite, gave the first impulse. Father Levadoux set the work in motion, and Father Richard brought it to completion, whilst Father Rivet blessed the splendid structure under the rectorship of Father John Olivier. As a pleasant conclusion to this tedious account of early building operations, we would subjoin the clear and accurate description of the Old Church at Cahokia published some years ago by one of its former pastors, the Rev. Robert Hynes.

"This church is built upon a stone foundation, 31 x 74 feet. The walls are hewn walnut logs placed upright six inches apart and leaning

---

<sup>13</sup> On Father Paul de Saint Pierre, cf. "The Catholic Historical Review," vol. V, p. 195, ss.

in from the perpendicular about eight inches. The sides of the logs facing each other are beveled to a depth of two inches to receive and hold the mixture of stone and mortar with which the interstices are filled. The logs are securely mortised into heavy timbers below and above, and braced at each angle of the building. Not a nail was used in the entire structure, but huge wooden pegs were employed where needed. The roof timbers are oak, squared to the dimensions of 4 x 4 inches and originally were covered with cypress clapboards. Wide sycamore boards cover the floor which slopes gently from the front wall to the altar rail with a fall of six inches. Originally the church had no sacristy, but this need was supplied in 1833 in the form of a small chapel projecting from the north wall. In the same year a corresponding chapel was built out from the south wall to accommodate the organ and choir. Later, in 1840, a larger sacristy was added to the rear of the building, and a confessional was placed in the north chapel. The church as it came from the hands of the builders 119 years ago is substantially intact today. Additions have been made, indeed, but practically nothing of the original building has been removed."<sup>14</sup>

And now we come to consider the most remarkable man of all the Sulpicians that served the church in the Illinois country, Father Gabriel Richard. 'Tis true, this truly great and many-sided man spent only six years of a long and eventful career in the Illinois Missions. Coming to Baltimore from his college in France in 1792, he was immediately sent to Kaskaskia, which post he held until May 1795, when Father Pierre Janin, the Missionary to the savages, took charge. After Janin's early departure for a new field, Father Gabriel returned to Kaskaskia, officiating there until the advent of Father Donatien Olivier in 1799. In Kaskaskia he lived among the ruins of former grandeur. Many of the houses were without roof and doors. The better part of the Creoles had migrated to St. Louis. Fort Chartres lay deserted, and its mighty ramparts were falling piece by piece into the Mississippi. St. Anne's Church of New Chartres was no more. The Illinois Indians, that had formed the two flourishing missions of Kaskaskia, were reduced to a pitiful remnant.<sup>15</sup> All was desolation and despair.

"The people at this post are the worst in all Illinois;" he writes to Bishop Carroll "there is no religion among them, scarcely anyone attending mass even on Sunday; intemperance, debauchery and idleness are supreme." Elsewhere, however, he received better encourage-

---

<sup>14</sup> "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 459.

<sup>15</sup> In consequence of the murder of the great Chief Pontiac by an Illinois Indian at Cahokia, the greater part of the Illinois tribes were exterminated. There was nothing left of the Tamarois Mission at this time, and very little of that of the Immaculate Conception at Kaskaskia.

ment. "I am tolerably well satisfied," he writes, "With my little village of Prairie du Rocher, although grave scandals are occasionally witnessed there. My chief consolation are from five or six English families, who live ten or fifteen miles from this place. They are surrounded by others who are Protestants but who would be easily led into the Church if I could speak the English language with greater facility."<sup>16</sup>

Yet Father Richard labored and prayed, knowing that the result was in the hands of God. The Parishes of Kaskaskia and Prairie du Rocher remained in his care from 1793 to 1798. On August 1st, 1797 he inscribed his name in the Baptismal Record of Ste. Genevieve as "Curé de Prairie du Rocher." In September 1798, however, he became Vicar-General and Parish priest of St. Anne's, Detroit, in succession to Father Levadoux, who was recalled to Baltimore.

Father Gabriel Richard was a many-sided genius. Priest, professor, founder of a university, editor, publisher of the first Bible printed in the Northwest, French and English scholar with a good knowledge of Spanish, German, Italian and the Algonquin languages, promoter of trade, and introducer of wool-carding and spinning in the Northwest, and the only member of Congress, that was, at the same time, a priest in good standing. Of course, the missionary in the Illinois country did not have the opportunity of showing all the facets of his personality: the wider field of Detroit was necessary for their development. Yet, he was always the man to recognize an opportunity when it presented itself, and to realize it in a thorough manner. He had his sorrows, too, and disappointments, and even persecutions to bear; yet he met them all like a man and hero. Father Gabriel Richard is, as Dr. Guilday justly says, "the greatest name in the missionary annals of the Sulpicians." Lanman's Directory of the United States Congress says of him: "He was a Roman Catholic priest and a man of learning . . . . During his pastorate of St. Ann's Church in Detroit it became his duty, according to the Roman Catholic religion, to excommunicate one of his parishioners, who had been divorced from his wife. For this he was prosecuted for defamation of character, which resulted in a verdict being given against him for one thousand dollars. This money the priest could not pay, and as his parishioners were poor French settlers they could not pay it for him, and he was thrown into prison. While confined in the common jail, with little hope of ever being liberated, he was elected a delegate to Congress, and went from his prison cell in the wilds of Michigan, to his seat on the floor of Congress."

---

<sup>16</sup> Richard to Carroll, January 24, 1796. Girardin, J. A., "Life and Times of Gabriél Richard," in "Michigan Pioneer Collections," vol. I, p. 482.

The testimony contained in the Journal of Bishop Joseph-Octave Plessis of Quebec, 1816, mingles generous praise with a little quiet sarcasm: "This ecclesiastic (M. Gabriel Richard) is moreover, thoroughly estimable on account of his regularity, of the variety of his knowledge, and especially of an activity, of which it is difficult to form an idea. He has the talent of doing, almost simultaneously, ten entirely different things. Provided with newspapers (gazettes) well informed on all political questions, ever ready to argue on religion, when the occasion presents itself, and thoroughly learned in theology, he reaps his hay, gathers the fruit of his garden, manages a fishery fronting his lot, teaches mathematics to one young man, reading to another, devotes time to mental prayer, establishes a printing press, confesses all his people, imports carding and spinning wheels and looms to teach the women of his parish how to work, leaves not a single act of his parochial register unwritten, invents an electric machine, goes on sick calls at a very great distance, writes letters to and receives others from all parts, preaches on every Sunday and holy-day both lengthily and learnedly, enriches his library, spends whole nights without sleep, walks for whole days, loves to converse, receives company, teaches catechism to his young parishioners, supports a girls' school, under the management of a few female teachers of his own choosing, whom he directs like a religious community whilst he gives lessons in plain-song to young boys assembled in a school he has founded, leads a most frugal life, and is in good health, as fresh and able at the age of fifty, as one usually is at thirty. Such is the abridged portrait of this more than ordinary man; extremely appreciated by the Bishop of Quebec and his traveling companions, but having against him the great majority of his parishioners; entirely set against him and several of whom, in their self-conceit and folly, would prefer remaining without a priest to having that one."<sup>17</sup>

Certainly we Catholics of the Mississippi Valley have every reason to hold in reverence and love one of our precious heirlooms, the memory of Father Gabriel Richard, and his Sulpician associates, in Cahokia, Kaskaskia, Prairie du Rocher and Vincennes.

From 1793 to 1798 the names of Rivet, Levadoux and Richard occur in the church records of each of the four parishes, as if they had regarded them as one religious establishment, each member of the community, however, residing in his own proper station. As a beautiful trait of the earnest and lovable character of these Sulpician missionaries, we would instance their daily spiritual reunion at the altar. When

---

<sup>17</sup> "American Catholic Historical Researches," vol. XXII, p. 224. After the burning of Detroit, Father Richard was greatly instrumental in the work of rebuilding the city. St. Anne's Church was removed to a more favorable locality. The troubles with the people of St. Anne's culminated in an interdict by Bishop Flagnet.

entering on their widely dispersed missions they had arranged among themselves that, day by day, they would devote the selfsame hour to prayer and meditation in common, just as if they were assembled in their far away community chapel. Separated in body, yet united in spirit, they would approach the throne of God as faithful in all things, giving thus a fine illustration of the scriptural saying: "O quam bonum et quam jucundum est fratres habitare in unum."

After Father Rivet's death, Feb. 1804, there were no more Sulpicians in the Illinois missions, until Bishop Flaget of Bardstown began to exercise spiritual jurisdiction over half of the Illinois country, soon to introduce his brother Sulpician, Louis William Valentine Du Bourg, to the other half, west of the river, as their Bishop, and immediately to relinquish to his dear friend the care, if not the possession, of his own half forever.<sup>18</sup>

The secular priests that were chosen to fill the parishes in succession to the Sulpicians, were the brothers Olivier, John and Donatien, natives of Nantes, France. They arrived in the Illinois country in February 1799, John going to Cahokia and Donatien to Kaskaskia and Prairie du Rocher. When Father Francis Savine journeyed from Canada down the Ohio in company with Bishop Flaget in May, 1811, he was told to go to Cahokia, as Father John Olivier had retired to New Orleans to become the chaplain of the Ursulines. From 1817 to 1827 Father Donatien is resident pastor of Prairie du Rocher, attending Kaskaskia once or twice a month. This noble priest's character is beautifully sketched by Bishop Spalding in his *Life of Bishop Flaget*.

"The Rev. Donatien Olivier was one among the most pious, zealous and efficient priests who ever labored in the missions of the Mississippi Valley. He was universally esteemed and beloved. By the French Catholics he was revered as a saint. His name is still held in benediction among them. He was for many years Vicar-General of the Bishop of Baltimore, for all the missions extending over the present states of Indiana and Illinois. He usually resided, it appears, at Prairie du Rocher; but he visited Kaskaskia, Cahokia, Vincennes and the other Catholic settlements. He was admirable for his child-like simplicity and unaffected piety, which traits he continued to exhibit in the midst of his apostolic labors, till old age compelled him to abandon the field and seek solace and prepare for death in retirement. He died on the

---

<sup>18</sup> At the coming of Bishop Du Bourg to St. Louis, Bishop Flaget requested that the far western part of his diocese, Illinois and a part of Indiana, be provided for from St. Louis, and his request was granted. This private arrangement was made permanent, at least in regard to western Illinois, by Roman decree in 1834, to remain a part of St. Louis diocese until the erection of the diocese of Chicago in 1843.

29th of January, 1841, at the Seminary of the Barrens, in Missouri, at the advanced age of ninety-five years."<sup>19</sup>

Father Francis Louis Savine, who served as pastor of Cahokia from 1812 to 1817 and incidentally attended the forsaken church of St. Louis so regularly during those years, that he was considered by many as its pastor, acted in Cahokia under the ordinary, and in St. Louis, under the delegated powers of Bishop Benedict Flaget of Bardstown, Kentucky.

One of the chroniclers of St. Louis, Judge Wilson Primm, who seems to have caught the inspiration from Bishop Rosati's historical interest, gives us a slight pen-picture of Father Francis Savine, the friend of his early days: "Priest Savine was the last of the Canadian Mission sent to this region of country by the Bishop of Quebec. There are many now living who remember "le pere Savine" with perfect distinctness. He was a man of fine presence, of amiable disposition, zealous in the performance of his duties, and especially kind to the poor and those in distress. There was no tearless eye in his congregation when he bade them adieu. The old Creoles of today still hold him in pleasant remembrance."

The good Sulpician missionaries had not labored in vain. There was a distinct revival of religion and culture in the old French villages along the borders of the Mississippi. We get a glimpse of the new life rising from the old in many a passing remark of friends and foes.

As Father Gabriel Richard found spiritual comfort and encouragement in the five or six English families of staunch Catholic faith and practice, so Father Levadoux and, after him, Father Olivier and Savine were upheld and cheered in their ceaseless struggle with infidelity and supine indifference by the bright example of Nicholas Jarrot of the Mansion House at Cahokia.

Living under the shadow of the church—the oldest in Illinois that is still in existence—Major Jarrot's life was an exemplary in church duties and devotion as that of the priest. He and Mme. Jarrot always preceded the family procession in going to and from mass on the Sabbath.

---

<sup>19</sup> "Sketches of the Life, Times and Character of the Rt. Rev. Benedict Joseph Flaget, First Bishop of Louisville," by M. J. Spalding, D. D., 1852. Governor Reynolds, who had personal knowledge of Father Olivier, said of him in his "My Own Times": "One of the ancient pioneer clergymen was the celebrated Mr. Olivier of Prairie du Rocher, Randolph County. This reverend divine was a high dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church for more than half a century. He acquired a great reputation for his sanctity and holiness, and some believed him to be possessed of the power to perform small miracles, to which he made no pretensions."

With him, as with most of the Catholic French and Creoles of that day, religion did not mean a soured spirit nor a saddened heart. The joy of life still had an attraction for them, and they showed their good sense in countering the manifold ills of existence with a light heart. Not that they did not go too far at times; not that they were all perfect specimens of Christian men and women. Yet, under the circumstances of frontier life, it was good for them to be cheerful, and it may be called a wonder, that they did not sink completely under the burdens of oppression and contempt.

"The French in many ways were lenient masters . . . Their wives spun linsey for the negroes' clothes, and they were taught the Catechism. One day the Jarrot family heard the cook's baby crying down in the basement. Ortance (the eldest daughter) went to investigate and found that the cook had run away and abandoned the child. Ortance named him Louis and took charge of the boy. So kind was his supervision, that when the slave became old enough to obtain his freedom, he did not want to go. Later, on the wedding night of Maria Brackett, daughter of Ortance, in 1841, Louis took a vacation from his job on a Mississippi steamboat, came back to Cahokia and cooked the wedding breakfast. After performing this act of devotion, he returned to his work, and that very night the steamboat blew up."<sup>21</sup>

It seems appropriate here to give a summary account of the visit which Bishop Flaget, the saintly Sulpician and friend of Levadoux, Richard, Rivet, the Oliviers, and Savine, in 1814, paid to the parishes and missions over which they once held spiritual sway. Though his jurisdiction did not extend beyond the Mississippi River he gladly accepted the invitation of Dr. Du Bourg, the administrator of Louisiana, to visit the parishes and missions on the Missouri side as well. On May 25 he started on horseback for Vincennes and reached it on the third day, tired, but happy at seeing his old flock, headed by Father Olivier. On May 30 he visited the grave of Father Rivet and sang the "Libera" over it. Devoting several days to the preparation of the Confirmandi he administered the sacrament to eighty-six persons. He preached in English as well as in French to the great satisfaction of the Americans. On June the 14th, he and Father Olivier set out for the Mississippi. They were escorted by a company of French Rangers. On the 18th they arrived at Cahokia, where they found Father Savine, "holding the handle of a skillet to make an omelet." The bishop found everything in good order. He confirmed one hundred and eighteen persons. The good people of Cahokia conducted their bishop to the banks of the Mississippi, which he crossed in a canoe, with no companion

---

21 "The Mansion House at Cahokia," *passim*.

but the oarsman. No public reception awaited him. At the confirmation services on July 4th he was attended by Father Savine and the Father Prior, Joseph Marie Dunand. The ladies of the city presented the prelate with a fine cross and mitre. On the 8th of July he departed for Florissant, where the entire population turned out to receive him; on the 11th he crossed the Missouri River, sitting in an armchair placed in a canoe, decorated with flowers. On the other side he visited Dardenne, where he confirmed one hundred persons, one of whom was 103 and another 115 years old. He arrived at St. Charles on the 18th, and on the 21st went to Portage de Sioux, confirming fifty-four persons. Then he returned to St. Charles and found a parish that had been at war with its pastor, Father Dunand, for two years: his earnest words brought peace and joy to all. He confirmed sixty-five persons, and on August 3 retraced his steps to St. Louis.

"This congregation is in a state of extreme indifference," he wrote, "yet some young people presented themselves for confession and revalidation of their marriages. Seventy-two persons were confirmed. Governor William Clark, the former associate of Meriwether Lewis in the discovery of the Columbia River, asked the bishop to baptize three of his children. On August 14th the bishop crossed the river to Illinois, where a large escort of horsemen and carriages received him and formed a procession to Cahokia. On the 2nd he departed for Prairie du Rocher to confirm a class of sixty-five. Though suffering from a fever, the prelate visited Kaskaskia on the 14th of September, where he set down the following words of praise: "The church is superb for the country; its length is eighty feet, its width forty feet. The evening was spent in blessing the good people." He confirmed one hundred and ten persons. On the 21st he went to Ste. Genevieve, where he was received with the usual honors. He preached strongly against balls, "to the great astonishment of dancers," and administered confirmation to three hundred and sixty-one persons. On October 5 he visited the Barrens, an American Catholic settlement, attended by Father Dunand from Florissant, and there confirmed forty-five persons. On his return to Ste. Genevieve he preached to the negroes, of whom there were about five hundred in the town and vicinity. Finding that marriage was not common among these poor slaves, he threatened their masters with excommunication, unless they afforded their servants every facility of lawful marriage. On the 27th of October he rejoined Father Olivier at Prairie du Rocher, spending a few days of charming solitude after so much distraction. November 3rd he returned to Kaskaskia, whence he took his departure for home by way of Vincennes. He was escorted by sixteen Creoles on horseback. The party reached Vincennes on the 12th of November. From the fulness of his great heart, the

Bishop wrote to his brother in France: "I have just returned from a mission where I had remained for seven months. It is situated among the French living along the banks of the impetuous Mississippi and the muddy Missouri. I was greatly surprised to find more than ten thousand Catholics, attended by two priests only, one of whom is seventy years old; the other, on account of his constitution, unable to travel on horseback. I cannot describe to you the pleasure it gave to these old-time French people to see me and to listen to me. Many irregularities may be found among them, it is true, but their faith is still strong. What sincere feeling they testified, and how many conversions were wrought! Although I could visit but half of the population, and only confirmed those who had made their first communion, I had the consolation of confirming more than twelve hundred. An episcopal throne was made for me out of beaver skins, decorated with jewels lent by the women."<sup>22</sup>

The next time Bishop Flaget came to visit St. Louis, he brought the newly appointed Bishop Louis William Valentine Du Bourg, a Sulpician like himself, under whose self-sacrificing devotion the Church was destined to take firm root in the soil of the west and grow into a mighty tree of perennial vitality and grandeur.

---

<sup>22</sup> Spalding's "Life of Bishop Benedict Flaget," pp. 129-142, *passim*.

## CHAPTER 11

### VICAR GENERAL JAMES MAXWELL

Six years had elapsed since the western part of Louisiana with New Orleans was transferred to the dominion of Spain, ere a change occurred in the spiritual administration of the country. But then the changes came thick and fast.

In 1722 the jurisdiction of the diocese of Santiago de Cuba was established over this region, under Bishop Joseph Echeveria, with Bishop Cyrillo de Barcelona as Vicar General, residing in New Orleans. In 1789 the diocese was divided, and the northern part, including Louisiana, was placed under Bishop Joseph de Trespalacios of St. Christopher de Havana with Bishop Cyrillo as his auxiliary. But the latter was not long after recalled to his monastery. In 1793, on April 25th, that part of the diocese of Havana, that was situated on the continent, Louisiana and the Floridas, was erected into a separate diocese under that name and received its first Bishop in the person of Louis Peñalver y Cardenas, a native of Havana.

It had been the policy of the Spaniards from the coming of Count O'Reilly to send over Irish soldiers and civilians for the defense and upbuilding of Louisiana. Hence Irish priests who had made their studies in Spain, especially at the University of Salamanca, were in great favor with the authorities. The necessity of Irish priests became even more pronounced, when English colonists from the United States crossed over to Louisiana in greater numbers. They were welcome, but it was expected of them, that they would become Catholics, if they were not Catholics before. Irish priests with Spanish training were justly considered the proper persons for this work of conversion. Fathers Thomas Hassett and Patrick Walsh, the future Grand Vicars of Bishop Peñalver, were among this number. They also received a larger salary from the King, than the other Missionaries and parish priests; six hundred dollars per annum, whilst the Spanish curates could claim only four hundred.

The only one of this numerous class of Irish Priests from Salamanca to find his way to Upper Louisiana, was the Rev. James Maxwell, pastor of Ste. Genevieve, and Vicar-General for Upper Louisiana, who, living under three successive governments, the Spanish, the French and the United States, was also known under the strange designations Don Diego Maxwell and M. Jacques Maxwell.

James Maxwell was an Irishman, probably born in Dublin, about 1742, as he states in his will that his brothers and sisters were living in Ireland, and particularly, his brother, Robert Maxwell, in Dublin. But

L. Marin Notre missionnaire

J. L. L. L.

L. L. L. L.

De Saint Pierre L.

Maxwell Cure

Henry Pratte L.

L. L. L. L.

Jean Oliva L.

Rev. D. Benedicto R.

A. M. L. St. Cyr  
Cott. P.

SIGNATURES OF PRIESTS OF STE. GENEVIEVE



whether James was born in Ireland or of Irish immigrants in Spain, he certainly made his theological studies at the Irish College in the celebrated University of Salamanca, and was there raised to the holy priesthood. Where he spent the first years of his ministry, we cannot say, probably, in Spain, in order to make himself familiar with the Spanish language. Others had found similar employment. A friend of his, Don Thomas O'Ryan, was chaplain of honor to the king of Spain and Confessor to the Queen. In 1794 however, Maxwell was engaged by the government for the American Mission,<sup>1</sup> and received the appointment as Vicar General of the Bishop of Louisiana,<sup>2</sup> signed by Eugenio de Llaguno, November 2, 1794, Bishop Peñalver y Cardenas had taken possession of his episcopal seat, New Orleans, on July 17th, 1795, and on August 2nd he began the discharge of his episcopal functions. The Bishop appointed Father Maxwell as Parish Priest of Ste. Genevieve in Upper Louisiana, in place of Father de Saint Pierre. He arrived in Ste. Genevieve in April 1796. The Pastor de Saint Pierre was then absent from home, probably in New Orleans on his return-trip from Baltimore. Father Maxwell, in a brief letter, expressed his regret at being deprived of the honor of making his acquaintance. Maxwell calls Ste. Genevieve "my Parish." For a time Father Maxwell may have resided in the neighboring village of New Bourbon, until the old pastor, Paul de Saint Pierre, could effect his departure for the South, where he was destined to administer to the spiritual wants of the ancient parish of Iberville until October 15th, 1826. Father James Maxwell must have been a very able and lovable man. "The Bishop of Salamanca had great confidence in him and brought him to the notice of the King of Spain. "Ellicot, who met him at New Madrid on his way down the Mississippi, says that he was "a well-informed, liberal gentleman."<sup>3</sup> In the French Life of Bishop Flaget he is described as "a learned and practical Irish Catholic Priest." It was hoped by the Spanish authorities, that he would convert the many American settlers in the Spanish Dominion to the Catholic Religion. This of course, Father Maxwell, did not and could not accomplish; yet our sketch of his life will show, that he was indeed, as Houck styles him, "a very active and enterprising man," as a priest and educator, as a business man, and as a real force in political life. In

---

<sup>1</sup> The University of Salamanca was under the immediate control of the Bishop who also bestowed the degrees in the name of the Pope and the King. The Irish College was only one of the numerous colleges affiliated with the University. There is a picture of the Courtyard at the Irish College in the Catholic Encyclopedia Art. Salamanca.

<sup>2</sup> In virtue of the union of Church and State, the Spanish King claimed the right of appointing the bishops and also minor clergymen, subject to the approval of the Church authorities.

<sup>3</sup> Ellicots Journal, p. 32, quoted by Houck, "History of Missouri," vol. II, p. 305.

fact, Father James Maxwell must be regarded as one of the founders of our statehood in Missouri.

Father Maxwell was above all things a true priest, and for that reason the difficulty of the work he was sent out to do, made a special appeal to his courage and determination. The state of religion in the vast district now placed under his general supervision as Vicar-General, was deplorable indeed. In 1799 Bishop Peñalver wrote: "The emigrants from the western part of the United States and the toleration of our government have introduced into this colony a gang of adventurers who have no religion and acknowledge no God, and they have made the morals of our people much worse, by intercourse with them in trade."

"Such too, is the case with the district of Illinois and the adjacent territory in which there has been a remarkable introduction of those adventurers. This evil, in my opinion, can be remedied only by not permitting the slightest American settlement to be made at the points already designated, nor on any part of the Red River."<sup>4</sup>

For the spiritual and moral advancement of the members of the Church and sanctification of their spiritual Fathers, Bishop Peñalver had on December 21, 1795, issued an "Instruction" for their government in which he decreed, among other things, that "it will become them so to walk, that neither their gravity render them odious, nor undue familiarity contemptible: let them visit rarely and endeavor that, in most cases, it be for the discharge of their ministry." He then enjoined on them the duty of residence in their parishes, promptness in administering the sacraments and visiting the sick to prepare them for death; to use brotherly correction in the case of scandals, reporting obstinate cases to the authorities and the Bishop; to maintain friendly relations with the governors and commandants; to be watchful that the royal revenues be paid; not to exercise the ministry beyond the limits of his parish; to report those failing to fulfil their Easter duties; not to neglect the catechism instruction, on the ground that there are public schools.

The Blessed Sacrament was to be exposed only on Corpus Christi and its Octave, on Quinquagesima Sunday and the two days following, and on the third Sunday of every month. Twenty wax candles were to be lighted on these occasions. Priests carrying Holy Communion to sick persons at a distance, in the country were to go on horseback, with surplice and stole, bareheaded, the Blessed Sacrament in a reliquary, in a bag hung around the neck by a cord, two attendants with lanterns and an *umbrellino*.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bishop Peñalver's long letter of 1799 as quoted by Shea in his "Life and Times of Archbishop Carroll," p. 579, ss.

<sup>5</sup> Bishop Peñalver's instruction.

The Bishop's zeal did not rest with these instructions, but moved him to make a number of episcopal visitations in the diocese. He found, however, that the three parishes, of Upper Louisiana, New Madrid, Ste. Genevieve and St. Louis, were far beyond his reach and, just like Bishop Cyrillo, failed to pay them the promised visit.

The duty of carrying out Bishop Peñalver's regulations in Upper Louisiana, therefore, devolved on his Vicar-General, James Maxwell. The difficulty, almost hopelessness, of the task must have dawned on the consciousness of the Bishop when he learnt of the great extent and isolation of the Parishes and the small number of priests attending them.

The pastors established in Vicar General Maxwell's district were, as we shall see, Father Ledru at St. Louis, Father Lusson at St. Charles and Father Paul de Saint Pierre in Ste. Genevieve, though even then appointed to Iberville in the South. Father Gibault had not, as yet arrived at New Madrid, but was expected there.

Beyond the river, in the diocese of Bishop Carroll of Baltimore, there were, at Vincennes, the Reverend Francis Rivet, successor to Gibault, and since February 1799, the brothers John and Donatien Olivier; John attending Cahokia and Donatien, Kaskaskia and Prairie du Rocher. That was the extent of priestly help and comfort Upper Louisiana enjoyed in the early days of Father Maxwell. But there was a Ste. Genevieve boy at his studies in far away Montreal, destined to succeed Father Maxwell as Pastor of Ste. Genevieve, Henri Pratte, the son of one of Ste. Genevieve's most worthy citizens.

Father de Saint Pierre, was naturally averse to his transfer to the South. He had found a real home, the only one so far, among the people of Ste. Genevieve. And the people also, were devoted to their good old pastor. But all came off agreeably on the arrival of the new pastor. Father Maxwell had under his immediate jurisdiction two almost equally important villages, Ste. Genevieve, and that settlement of French Royalists, three miles below on the river, called New Bourbon. New Bourbon is now but a name, whilst Ste. Genevieve is a beautiful little city, full of the memorials of the past, some of whose quaint houses date back to the days before Father Maxwell's coming.

Ste. Genevieve was, no doubt, the official residence of Father Maxwell although he owned property at New Bourbon and made frequent visits to that settlement.

As doubts have been raised about this matter of residence, we would quote the affidavits made in the so-called "Maxwell Claim."<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> "Maxwell Claim. Application of the Heirs and Legal Representatives of Hugh H. and John P. Maxwell to the General Land Office, for Land Script in lieu of their lands sold by the United States Government and lying within the limits of a Spanish Grant to James Maxwell, which was confirmed to Hugh H. and John P. Maxwell by

"I knew Father Maxwell when I was a boy; as he often came to our neighborhood," testifies Allen W. Holloman, "My father lived about twenty miles southwest of Ste. Genevieve, where the priest lived. On the way from Ste. Genevieve to Mine-la-Motte and the Black River country, it was the habit of the priest to pass through our settlement going to that region and return." Mrs. Alzire M. Kennerly deposed among other things: "I am Pierre Menard's daughter. I knew priest Maxwell of Ste. Genevieve. His nephew, Hugh H. Maxwell married one of my sisters. The priest and my father were very intimate." These testimonies are of persons of the very highest character and standing, as United States Senator Boggy styles them, and they are conclusive as to Father Maxwell's residence.

Father Maxwell attended a number of settlements within a semicircle of about one hundred miles, among them, New Madrid, Cape Girardeau, St. Michael's, Potosi, Old Mines, and Perryville. Concerning the first church at Perryville we have the written testimony of Isidore Moore, who came to Perry County as early as February 1801. "The old church" he says was "built in 1812. The Reverend James Maxwell, Vicar General, blessed it, and said the first Mass in it; He served us the year 1813, but how often I cannot recollect; That Reverend gentleman had some years previous occasionally said Mass a few times in the dwellinghouse of old Mr. Tucker. Perhaps it was in the years 1806 or 1807."

Father Maxwell's duties as Vicar General for Upper Louisiana consisted, for the most part, in visiting the parishes that were bereft of their own pastors, and, at times, giving faculties to some stray priest that asked for them. When Bishop Peñalver was promoted to the Archiepiscopal See of Guatemala, July 20, 1801, Father Maxwell's powers as Vicar General lapsed; but as the Bishop had, with permission from Rome, appointed the Vicars General at New Orleans, Thomas Hassett and Patrick Walsh, administrators of the diocese, Father Maxwell's powers were probably renewed, so that he remained Vicar General for Upper Louisiana until the death of Father William Walsh, "Vicar General and Administrator 'ad interim' of the diocese of Louisiana," that is up to March 22, 1806. Now, as there was no one among the Bishops of the Province to restore order, Bishop Carroll assumed

---

Act of Congress, approved 27th April 1816." We are indebted to the Librarian of the Missouri Historical Society, Miss Stella Drumm, for the use of this very important document. Amos Stoddard, in his "Sketches, Historical and Descriptive, of Louisiana," 1812, says of this Concession of land: (Page 135) "A tract of one hundred and two thousand eight hundred and ninety six arpens was conceded November the third, 1799 to a Catholic Clergyman now in Upper Louisiana, who is an Irishman by birth. This concession was never extended on the lands embraced by it; nor did any Irish Catholics attempt to avail themselves of the benevolent and pious designs of his Catholic Majesty."

7 Original in the Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

the administration, as he was empowered to do by Rome. When Propaganda approved his action, about the beginning of 1807, he sent Father John Olivier to New Orleans and, as administrator Apostolic of the Diocese of New Orleans appointed him his Vicar General.<sup>8</sup>

Father Maxwell had extensive holdings of real estate in the districts of Ste. Genevieve and New Bourbon. A number of these parcels of land were sold to pay the debts of the holder after his sudden death, May 28th, 1814. The inventory gives us some interesting information in regard to the concession of a tract of four leagues or twelve miles square, embracing 112,896 arpents, situated in and around what is now Reynolds County. Congress on April 27, 1816, two years after Father Maxwell's death, passed an act, entitled, An Act for the benefit of John P. Maxwell and Hugh H. Maxwell; "that the right title and interest of the United States of and to any real estate whereof a certain James Maxwell died seized, the same be hereby released unto John P. Maxwell of the Missouri Territory and Hugh H. Maxwell of the Territory of Illinois, saving and reserving to all persons other than the United States, any right, title or interest of, in, and to the premises aforesaid." This act did not transfer these tracts to Father Maxwell's supposed heirs, the nephews, John and Hugh, but only relinquished in their favor any possible claims of the United States. In consequence, the Diocese of Missouri, or St. Louis, as well as the Maxwell heirs, laid claim to the vast tract in Reynolds County, with but indifferent success. The land was afterwards sold by the United States to new settlers. The Church got nothing out of the holdings of the former Vicar General, but the Maxwell heirs have received some reimbursement from settlers for their readiness to quiet a clouded title, and in fact, have sold some of the land. as John Buford of Reynolds County testified. This is the legal aspect of the case. But there is an historical interest attaching to the whole transaction. Father Maxwell's expressed purpose was to found an Irish Catholic colony in the wilds of Central Missouri and he had practically laid the foundations of such an enterprise.

The region at the headwaters of the Black River and the Current River is noted for the beauty and picturesqueness of its scenery. Its rugged hills and fruitful valleys, its limpid rivers and creeks, have become known far and wide. Then there was the promise of rich mineral deposits. A Catholic government of liberal principles, as the Spanish administration was, promised a new and happy Ireland to that persecuted people. Father Maxwell, himself an Irishman, was persona grata with the Spanish court and government. The government would do all in its power to secure for the Catholic settlers all the advantages, both spiritual and temporal, that they might crave.

---

<sup>8</sup> Shea, J. G., "Life and Times of Archbishop Carroll," pp. 594, 595.

Father Maxwell's petition was made November 3, 1799, and the grant of the land asked for was made by Lieutenant Governor Carlos Dehault Delassus on the same day and in the same year, 1799.

The Lieutenant Governor had the power of granting land titles; but the grant had to be submitted to the Intendant General, who resided in New Orleans. This was often neglected, and hence arose many law-suits. Yet the United States Board of Commissioners on Spanish Claims usually confirmed all Patents issued by the individual Lieutenant Governors, even if no proof of confirmation by the Intendant General could be shown. Whether James Maxwell attended to this matter is not known. His Patent was, however, approved by an Act of Congress.

From Father Maxwell's petition it appears that the first suggestion of an Irish colony in the heart of the wilderness of Upper Louisiana had come from the Spanish minister of State in charge of the Indies,<sup>9</sup> under which title were embraced all Spanish possessions in America. The tract of land suitable for the purpose lay around the forks of the Black River, about eighty miles from Cape Girardeau, and ninety to ninety-five miles from Ste. Genevieve, and about thirty-five miles south of Potosi. The greater part lay in the present county of Reynolds, adjoining Iron and Wayne.

Ample testimonies of the truth of this statement are to be found in the printed Report of the trial held after the death of Father Maxwell, in regard to the ownership of this very tract of land. One of them gives the opportunity of describing the route Father Maxwell may be supposed to have travelled to and from his colony. From Ste. Genevieve to Mine-la-Motte or St. Michaels extended the road that was blazed by Renault through the wilderness along a primeval Indian trail for the purpose of removing the lead from the mines of Madison County to the River at Ste. Genevieve. At St. Michaels the road crossed the Little St. Francis, and ten miles farther west, the Big St. Francis. Ironton lies on this road, about twenty miles from Fredericktown. From there the road lay southward into the very heart of what is now the county of Reynolds. Father Maxwell, no doubt, often stopped over at Mine-la-Motte for priestly ministrations to the Catholics of St. Michaels (Fredericktown) and environs, as they were among his parishioners. The Records of their marriages and baptisms he kept at Ste. Genevieve. There was a little cemetery at the junction of the Ste. Genevieve and Perryville roads, near Mine-la-Motte. Very probably it was here at the "New Village," half way between Mine-la-Motte and Old St. Michaels, that Mass was said by Father Maxwell in some private dwelling.

---

<sup>9</sup> The Duke De Alcudia, Minister of State, having manifested his desire that some Catholics "from Ireland should come to settle themselves in this colony of Louisiana," etc.

That Father Maxwell had faith in his Irish colony may be judged from the fact that he built a solid house of stone for a store and established a trading house in the wilderness.<sup>10</sup> But the Irish settlers Father Maxwell had brought to his incipient colony were not as prosperous as they had been led to expect, though the store conducted by the Founder of the colony was a real God-send to the people scattered through the wilderness.

Being a highly educated and public-spirited man, the pastor of Ste. Genevieve took a deep interest in the erection of schools. Ste. Genevieve had for many years been the proud possessor of a Grammar school. But in 1808 the Ste. Genevieve Academy was incorporated with twenty-one trustees composed of the best citizens of the town, with Father Maxwell as President. Mr. Mann Butler, the historian of Kentucky, was engaged as principal, and the erection of a fine stone building was begun at once and completed. School was opened, but the times were not propitious to the venture, and it was discontinued until 1820.

From far-away Canada comes the following notice of the Ste. Genevieve Academy. "Under a picture of the old house, writes Brother Emery, I find the following notes: "This building was erected at Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, 1808, by the trustees of the Louisiana Academy, to be used as a school for the Catholic children of Ste. Genevieve. It was placed in charge of Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1820,<sup>11</sup> as we shall recount in the proper place. The building still crowns this hill on which it was erected in 1808, not as a ruin, but kept in excellent state of preservation, with an addition at the rear as the residence of Mr. Thomas Rozier, whose Father Firmin Rozier built the addition in 1854.

---

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Huff, of Iron County, one of the witnesses in the Maxwell Claim trial in 1873, testified: "I am sixty years of age. I came to this part of the country in 1829, and have been acquainted with the Maxwell Claim at the forks of Black River since my coming to the country. The Maxwell colony then was a part of the history of the country, and spoken of more, perhaps, than any matter connected with the early settlement. I have heard the old settlers who lived here when Maxwell had his store at the forks, talk together about those times (of what they were all acquainted with), about trading at the store in Maxwell's life time, and about the foreigners Maxwell had in his colony, who were very ignorant of the way to get along in a new country. The store was the only one beyond Potosi, which was thirty-five miles off, and all the settlers traded at Maxwell's. The colony and store were not continued after the death of Maxwell, the priest. When I came to the country there were few people and some Indians still. I hunted over the Maxwell grant and had the line of survey pointed out to me by the old inhabitants who spoke of it as knowing the survey . . . . The old settlers expressed regrets that the Maxwell store was discontinued, where they were all in the habit of trading. Whereas when I came to the country they had to go to Potosi to trade and for some time afterwards, until other stores were established."

<sup>11</sup> Brother Emery is or was Superior of the Christian Brothers.

Of course, Mr. E. Flagg, who viewed the "handsome structure of stone, commanding a noble prospect," in its state of ruinous perfection," and "enjoying the reputation of being haunted," must have himself been haunted by the spirit of old romance; for its "broken windows outlined against the western sky", are but idle imaginings of a passer-by, not the result of serious investigation. The building was completed and was never in ruins, but was used for school purposes at the very time of his visit.<sup>12</sup>

Of the village itself Mr. Flagg says: "It has that decayed and venerable aspect characteristic of all those early French settlements." Yet, another Traveller, Ashe, gives us a glimpse of the altar of the church of Ste. Genevieve in Father Maxwell's days: "At the Upper end (of the church) there is a beautiful altar, the fronton of which is brass gilt and enriched in medio-relievo, representing the religions (religious orders) of the world, diffusing the benefits of the gospel over the new world. In the middle of the altar there is a crucifix of brass gilt, and underneath it, a copy of a picture by Rafael, representing the Madonna and Child, St. Elizabeth and St. John. In a second group there is a St. Joseph, all perfectly well drawn and colored. The beauty and grace of the Virgin are beyond description and the little Jesus and St. John are charming."<sup>13</sup>

Father Maxwell did not escape the usual fate of men of strong character to be misunderstood and even maligned by the idle and the envious. There is a letter in the Baltimore Archives, written by the Pastor of Ste. Genevieve and dated Nov. 17, 1810, that has a bearing on an investigation conducted by Archbishop Carroll of Baltimore into the character of Father Maxwell, then in the 68th year of his life. From a passage of Father Stephen Theodore Badin's letter to Archbishop Carroll on the same matter, it appears that forty three persons under the leadership of one Joseph Fenwick had sent a remonstrance against the Pastor of Ste. Genevieve to Bishop Carroll in order to have him removed, or as Father Maxwell openly charges, to have him replaced by Father Badin himself. It was six years after the withdrawal of the Spanish authorities from Upper Louisiana, and the entire country was now under Bishop Carroll as administrator. Hence his interference. Letters containing these charges were sent by both Carroll and Badin to Father Maxwell. The Trappist, Urban Guillet, was the bearer of both letters.

What the charges were, we cannot say at present, as the remonstrance of Joseph Fenwick and his co-signers is not at hand, nor the letter of Bishop Carroll, nor that of Father Badin. We hope to find these letters also, but in the meantime it is safe to say, that the charges referred mainly, if not entirely, to breaches of ecclesiastical discipline. It may

---

<sup>12</sup> Flagg, "The Far West," 1838., p. 96.

<sup>13</sup> Ashe's Travels, p. 119.

be surmised that his long terms of absence from home, whilst attending to the affairs of his proposed Irish Colony, and a rather outspoken contempt for the American Catholic immigrants from Maryland and Kentucky, were the main grievances. But, as Father Badin admits, twelve of the fourteen remonstrants were unknown to him and seven were not much entitled to his esteem, "whilst the remaining twenty four were of his former Kentucky parishioners."

"To my certain knowledge," says Father Badin in his letter to the Bishop of Baltimore, "there were (besides the cause of Father Maxwell) many causes which demand the presence of authority of a Bishop to retrieve or improve the affairs of religion."<sup>14</sup> "We will give Father Maxwell's answer to Bishop Carroll and Father Badin, without note or comment, only promising this fact, as recorded by Father Guilday in his *Life and Times of John Carroll*. "The two pioneer missionaries of Kentucky, Badin and Nerinecx, had been trained in a more rigid school of theology which savoured greatly of the Jansenistic spirit then prevalent in French and Belgian ecclesiastical circles."<sup>15</sup> It was exactly these two men who found fault with the priestly character of Father Maxwell. Father Maxwell felt aggrieved at what he considered unjust reproach, and declared he would cease his pastoral functions and confine himself to saying Mass. But he must have changed his mind or perhaps been exonerated, as he continued the pastoral care of Ste. Genevieve and its dependencies until his death in 1814.<sup>16</sup> We now quote the following retort courteous from the letter of Father Maxwell to Archbishop Carroll: "I fear that your Lordship is not sufficiently aware of the duplicity of some French ecclesiastics; they are a jealous, meddling, troublesome set of men. I had the opportunity of being in a state of intimacy with them these five and thirty years that I am a missionary, and I have got understanding and discernment enough to know the human mind. Your Lordship observes to me that you received a petition having the signatures of forty-three persons, heads of families; my congregation consists altogether of French, and I boldly assert, that no Frenchman has signed that petition and that not these persons, heads of families, have signed it, who are altogether unknown to me, excepting Mr. Fenwick<sup>17</sup> who lived for many years past fifty or sixty miles from this place, and who, of course can be but very little acquainted with my personal conduct. I feel the greatest sorrow and regret to show the least opposition and disobedience to the orders of Your Lordship; but from the causes alleged, I cannot cheerfully submit to the investigation of my conduct by the

<sup>14</sup> Two Maxwell Letters in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, pp. 231-234.

<sup>15</sup> Guilday, Peter, "Life and Times of John Carroll," p. 520.

<sup>16</sup> Printed in St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," pp. 231 and 232.

<sup>17</sup> L. Cit., p. 234; Maxwell accuses Fenwick of "having raised his children without the love and fear of God."

Reverend Mr. Badin; for I consider him judge and party; I should always object to him as a judge in either an ecclesiastical or civil tribunal in a case of mine."<sup>18</sup>

It was on the 4th day of March 1804 that Major Amos Stoddard, in behalf of the United States, took possession of the territory of Louisiana, under the treaty of cession. The solemn act of lowering in quick succession the Spanish and the French flags, and hoisting the flag of the United States, took place at St. Louis.<sup>19</sup> It then devolved upon Congress to provide for the better government of the new territory. A governor was appointed, a House of Representatives was elected. A Legislative Council was to be selected by the President of the United States out of eighteen persons nominated by the Territorial House of Representatives. The five counties entitled to representation were: St. Charles, St. Louis, Cape Girardeau, Ste. Genevieve and New Madrid. The first House consisted of thirteen members, and convened at the residence of Joseph Robidoux, December 7, 1812. From among the eighteen persons they had nominated for members of the Council, President Jefferson selected nine, among them the Reverend James Maxwell, whom his associates at once elected member of the Committee of Enrollment, and on January 19, 1814, presiding officer of the body. The Second General Assembly which met at St. Louis on the 5th day of December, 1814, chose William Neely as presiding officer, because Father Maxwell, as we have already stated, had been killed by a fall from his horse on May 28th of the same year.

From the Journal of the House of Representatives, as given in the "Missouri Gazette and Illinois Advertiser," we would quote: "Dec. 6, 1814. Mr. Scott: 'I am instructed to acquaint the House of Representatives, that a vacancy happened in the Legislative Council by the death of the Honorable James Maxwell, for the County of Ste. Genevieve,' December 7. In conformity to notice of yesterday from the Legislative Council that a vacancy has become therein, and on motion of Mr. Wilson, the House proceeded to the nomination of two persons, one of whom is to

---

<sup>18</sup> L. Cit., p. 232.

<sup>19</sup> "There were a great many inhabitants," says Edwards in his "Great West," "who looked upon the transfer even at first with disfavor, but it was confined principally to that class whose possessions were meagre and consequently who had but little to hope for in the rise of property. The *coureurs des bois* and the *voyageurs*, doubtless regretted the change, as it gave possession of the country to a people who would throw some trammels over the wild liberties of their vagabondish life. But others regretted the change from political and religious motives. The last Lieutenant Governor Delassus, is said by Barbé-Marbois to have wept when the flag was furled, the tricolor now of the new French Republic, that had superseded the Lilies of France." The selection of Father Maxwell as a member of the Territorial Council had a tendency to conciliate the old French and Spanish settlers with the new order of things. Cf. "Great West," pp. 278.

supply the vacancy in the Legislative Council occasioned by the death of the Honorable James Maxwell.”

Father Maxwell died at the age of seventy-two years and was buried May 30, 1814, in the Church he had served so well. Father Francis Savine of Cahokia performed the last rites of the Church. When the old church was enlarged by Father Weiss, the body remained undisturbed. Now the remains rest beneath the pavement of the sanctuary in the church, so tastefully enlarged and renovated by the present pastor the Very Reverend Charles Van Tournhout. One beautiful eminence near the city still bears the name of its former owner, Maxwell's Hill. His name is one of which Ste. Genevieve may well be proud.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> After storm and strife comes rest eternal. We would subjoin this inscription on Father Maxwell's tombstone, Ste. Genevieve Parish Church:

Ci git  
Le Rev. Jacques Maxwell  
décédé le 28 Mai, 1814  
agé de 72 ans  
Curé de Cette Paroisse  
de 1797 a 1814

Heureux ceux qui demeurent dans votre maison, Seigneur Ils vous honerant des  
tous siècles. Psaume 83—vers 5.

## WANDERING WESTWARD

Since the 6th day of October 1788, when Bishop Hubert of Quebec cheerfully transferred his authority over the Illinois Country to the Prefect Apostolic, at Baltimore, Dr. Carroll was very solicitous in supplying priests for those neglected missions. Bishop Hubert had also written about Father Gibault having "incurred the suspicion of treason against the British government," and of Father de la Valiniere being "a man of good morals," but of "a turbulent spirit." The first, rather severe judgment was accepted as a warning against the former Vicar General of Quebec, the other judgment, though rather ominous, was disregarded in the appointment of Father de la Valiniere as the Vicar-General of Baltimore. Dr. Carroll was led in the course of time to make some other unfortunate appointments, although the most of them were good men and priests. Three of these appointees of Monseigneur Carroll successively held the position of Pastors of the Parish of St. Louis, on the Spanish side, although they had been engaged for the missions and parishes in Illinois. They were the Dominican Father Ledru, the Benedictine Monk Didier, and the Secular Priest Pierre Janin. Another appointee of Dr. Carroll, the Recollet Charles Leander Lusson, remained at Cahokia about four months, when he obtained an appointment from Bishop Peñalver of Louisiana to the pastorate of St. Charles on the Missouri. The first of these whom Bishop Carroll later on styles, "that apostate Dominican, called Ledru," came to Detroit from Canada and received his appointment to the Parish of Cahokia from Dr. Carroll in 1789, but almost immediately crossed over to the Spanish side. He exercised his ministry at St. Charles and St. Ferdinand, and, on the departure of Father Bernard de Limpach, became Pastor of St. Louis. What roused Dr. Carroll's anger against him was his duplicity, especially his former unauthorized claim, that he had been sent to America as a Missionary Apostolic. His first entry in the Register of Baptisms occurs in November 1789, and the last in September 1793, during which period he baptized one hundred and sixty-eight whites, fifty-five negroes, and nineteen Indians; solemnized twenty-nine marriages of whites and two of Indians and whites and officiated at the interment of seventy whites, thirty-five negroes, and three Indians.

Father Ledru's successor in St. Louis was the celebrated Benedictine of the Congregation of St. Maur, Dom Pierre Joseph Didier. Father Didier's life was a most eventful one. At the outbreak of the French Revolution he was stationed at the Abbey Church of St. Denis, the

place of sepulture of the French monarchs, since the days of Dagobert I, A. D. 638. No church in Christendom had so many relics, few were so rich in glorious memories. In 1789 whilst Procurator of the Abbey, Dom Didier, had permitted the royal troops to quarter there, an action which made him obnoxious to the radical element in Paris, and eventually brought ruin to the Abbey itself. On the 31st day of July, 1793 its destruction was decreed by the National Convention. The decree was carried out with savage fury, the bodies of dead Kings and Queens were dug up and thrown into lime-pits; the monuments were broken and the fragments scattered. Only the bare walls remained to tell of the vengeance of an infuriated mob. Dom Didier had fled from the doomed Abbey in 1789 and kept himself in hiding until a safe and honorable place should be found for him.

A company of French Catholics had been formed in Paris in 1790 for the purpose of founding a colony in the backwoods of America. A tract of land, about three million acres, north of the Ohio River was secured by the Company. The colony was named Gallipolis. The Papal Nuncio at Paris was requested by the leaders of the Company to obtain from Rome the appointment of a Bishop for the new colony. The choice of the members for this position was the same Benedictine Dom Didier of the Congregation of St. Maur. The Prefect of the Propaganda, Cardinal Antonelli, answered that there was a Bishop in that region, John Carroll of Baltimore. But Dom Didier replied, that the location of the new colony was so far inland from Baltimore, that Bishop Carroll could not give proper care to it. Besides the Colony was French, and Frenchmen wanted to have a French Bishop. The Nuncio wrote a second time to Cardinal Antonelli, saying that three or four priests (Sulpicians) were preparing to go to Gallipolis, with Dom Didier as the spiritual head of the colony. Propaganda yielded, and on April 26th, 1790 appointed Father Didier, not Bishop, nor Vicar Apostolic, but Vicar General in spiritualibus for the space of seven years, on condition that such jurisdiction should not conflict with that of Dr. Carroll. Besides Dom Didier's faculties would have to be confirmed by Bishop Carroll before he could use them. About Didier's character the Cardinal was informed that he was a religious of good morals, sound in doctrine, though of an impetuous and idealistic nature. Bishop Carroll, on September 3rd, 1791, speaks of the arrival, last year, of a Benedictine Monk, with a Congregation on "the banks of the Ohio." Now, as Carroll held jurisdiction over all the territory of the United States, and as the United States certainly claimed the Northwest territory, including Ohio, as a part of its domain, the Congregation of Gallipolis was subject to Bishop Carroll from the very start. In consequence of these facts becoming known, the Papal Nuncio at Paris disadvised the Sulpicians

from going with the colonists. They then decided to go to Baltimore. Bishop Carroll was kept informed about the whole matter by Cardinal Antonelli, and Father Didier obtained approval of his faculties from him.<sup>1</sup>

The colony did not thrive; neither temporally nor spiritually. The colonists, for the most part, were Parisians altogether unadapted to the conditions of pioneer life in the wilderness, and spiritually many of them were tainted with the irreligious spirit of the pre-revolution times. At last the colony broke up, its members scattering in all directions: The better part of them sought refuge at New Madrid, New Bourbon and St. Louis, all on the Spanish side of the river. Only a small remnant of the several thousand French colonists remained in the city of Gallipolis. When Fathers Badin and Barrieres visited them in September 1793, "they were delighted and at their departure they shed bitter tears."<sup>2</sup>

A sad story of failure, yet one replete with all the elements of old romance, redolent of an old-world civilization ground to dust in contact with primeval nature and its inexorable laws.

On July 21st, 1792, Dom Didier's name is signed in the Baptismal Register of St. Charles Borromeo's Church in St. Charles on the Missouri River. A little later we find Didier at Florissant, and in 1794 he took up his residence in St. Louis, having attended to its spiritual wants since December 1793. From December 1793, to April 1799, he baptized two hundred and twenty whites, seventy-nine negroes, and sixteen Indians. He solemnized seventy-three marriages of whites and one marriage of white and Indian, and buried eighty-five whites, sixty-one negroes, and nine Indians.

Dom Didier's life in St. Louis was quiet and peaceful. He was, no doubt, glad to have found this haven of rest. Being a Benedictine Monk, he had a special love for the beauty of nature. Hone, in his "Every-Day Book" for 1826 says: "The Monks have compiled a Catalogue of flowers for each day in the year, and dedicated each flower to a particular saint, on account of it flowering about the time of the saint's festival." It is said of Father Didier that he delighted in green herbage and bright flowers; No doubt, he also remembered their old-time names, and their religious associations and the French designation for the flower-beds in a church-yard, "*Les Bouquest de l'Eglise.*" But no Benedictine garden was complete without a large assortment of herbs whose fragrance and medicinal virtues might serve in alleviating the pains and bodily ailments of his spiritual children. And then, the good Benedictine was

---

<sup>1</sup> See "The Gallipolis Colony" by John McGovern, O. P., in "Records and Studies of Catholic Historical Society," vol. 37, No. 1. Also "The Gallipolis Colony," by L. J. Kenny, S. J., in "Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, pp. 415; and Guilday's "Life and Times of John Carroll," pp. 374-407.

<sup>2</sup> Spalding, "Sketches of the Early Catholic Missionaries of Kentucky," p. 62.

a lover of the Cross. On the highest spot of town near the west gate, he built a calvary, that is a large stone platform with stone steps on all four sides. A large crucifix was erected in the center of this Calvary, to throw its shadow over the living and the dead of his Parish.<sup>3</sup> We can easily picture the character of Father Didier as of a pious, kindly and benevolent old man, grave in his manner, and of a benign countenance, and highly respected by all. He is reported to have died in October 1799. His last recorded ministerial act in St. Louis is dated May 16th, 1799. During his last illness Father Lusson attended to St. Louis from St. Charles, and continued to do so until the arrival of Father Pierre Janin, a secular priest, whom Bishop Carroll sent to the Illinois country in company with Fathers Richard and John Francis Rivet.

From Father Rivet's letters<sup>4</sup> we learn that on October 20th, 1795, Father Janin was permanently settled at Kaskaskia. Besides the fact, that the Indians of that region desired a missionary, the great chief de Conague, who has the greatest influence over all the other tribes, seems to have taken too strong a hold of him to let him go elsewhere." The French were also anxious to retain the priest. But "Father Janin had no aptitude for missionary work," as Father Rivet writes six months later, and resigned his Commission. The small salaries promised by the American government were not forthcoming, in spite of Bishop Carroll's intercession. The missionaries were actually starving. There is a sinister note in this letter in regard to Father Janin: "he will pass into the Spanish domain." On May 24th, 1796, Father Rivet praises Janin as a man of "pure faith and irreproachable morals," but represents him as saying that "his age does not allow him to pursue an enterprise a thousand times more painful and difficult than he had thought." Shortly before this, Father Rivet had learnt that Father Janin was about to leave for New Orleans, and intended to send his resignation to Bishop Carroll from that city. Father Rivet was now appointed Vicar-General, signing himself at the same time, "Missionary appointed for the Savages, for the moment exercising the ministry in the Parish of St. Francis Xavier."<sup>5</sup>

Father Janin had really left his post of duty without an exeat and started on his way to New Orleans. But stopping at the southernmost point reached by Father Marquette on his voyage of discovery, the Post of Arkansas, was induced to remain there with faculties from Bishop Peñalver of Louisiana. The Register of Baptisms, Marriages and Sepul-

<sup>3</sup> Rothensteiner, "The St. Louis Calvary" in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Maes, Camillus P., Bishop of Covington, in "The Ecclesiastical Review," July and August numbers, 1906.

<sup>5</sup> Maes, op. cit., pp. 36-42 passim.

tures of the Parish of Arkansas lacks the two first pages: On page 3, Father Janin enters the record of a Baptism under date of the 13th of September, 1796. From that day on until December 28th, 1799, Father Janin baptized eighty-seven persons, and united in Marriage eighteen couples. After that there is a vacancy of almost three years. On April 6th, 1800, Pierre Janin became the canonical pastor of the Parish of St. Louis.<sup>6</sup> During the four and a half years of his administration he baptized two hundred and twenty-five whites, an hundred and fifteen negroes and fifty-nine Indians; solemnized the marriages of thirty-four whites and two whites and Indians, and buried one hundred and thirty-eight whites, fifty-eight negroes, and nineteen Indians. The large number of interments recorded during Father Janin's pastorate is accounted for by the fact that the smallpox made its first appearance in St. Louis on the 15th of May, 1801. But when the Spanish Dominion came to an end Bishop Peñalver was promoted to the Archiepiscopal See of Guatemala. His Vicar-Generals in New Orleans, Rev. Thomas Cannon Hasset, and Rev. Patrick Walsh continued to exercise their powers with express permission from Rome. Canon Hasset on June 10th, 1803, issued a circular letter to each priest in the Diocese asking whether he wished to retire with the Spanish forces or to remain.

The pastors of St. Louis and St. Charles, Pierre Janin and Leander Lussou, retired with the Spanish forces, leaving the entire field of Upper Louisiana to Father Maxwell, the Vicar General, and a visitor from the East, Father Thomas Flynn.<sup>7</sup>

Of Father Thomas Flynn, "Capuchin of the Order of St. Francis," as he styles himself in the Records of Florissant, administered the Parish of St. Louis from December 1806 to January 1808 and also engaged himself to visit the Parish of St. Ferdinand six times per year for the purpose of singing Highmass and baptizing. For this service he was to receive from each family at least one bushel of wheat. Those refusing to contribute were to be constrained by the chief trustee to do so. Father Flynn's Baptisms at Florissant numbered thirty. Two marriages were solemnized by him in 1807. The contract obliged him also to visit the sick and to prepare the children for First Holy Communion.

Father Flynn arrived in St. Louis early in November 1806. On November 8th, he wrote a letter to a Wm. McCordell of Bardstown, Ky., in which the following passage occurs: "I have said Mass in the Church, which is pretty decent, twice; and tomorrow, Sunday the Churchwardens, at the High-Mass are to install me as pastor over the place. The Church has a tolerably good bell, high altar, pulpit and commodious pews. The house for the priest is convenient, but rather out of repair.

<sup>6</sup> Church Records of St. Louis Cathedral.

<sup>7</sup> Shea, "Life and Times of Bishop Carroll," p. 582.

There is annexed to it a large garden well stocked with fruit trees, barn, stable and other out-offices.

"There is to be an assembly of the parishioners within the next few days in order to consider making a provision for my support, which will be paid annually. In short, my dear Friend, for the animal life, it is highly probable, I shall be very well off; and it is only the spiritual which gives me pain. For I shall be sixty miles distant from the clergyman who is nearest me. However, I shall endeavor to have the comfort of seeing him as often as possible."<sup>8</sup>

It has been stated that Father Flynn had no authority to exercise pastoral ministrations in St. Louis, because he had no dimissorials to show nor faculties, from any one. Yet it must be remembered that Father James Maxwell was considered Vicar General of the district of Upper Louisiana, and it can be presumed, as even, Father Nerineckx presumes, that Father Maxwell did kindly receive his compatriot and consented to his stay in St. Louis. Very little was known about Father Thomas Flynn until recently, and what has now come to light is not favorable to the Capuchin of the Order of St. Francis. One of the earliest missionaries in New York and Pennsylvania after the dissolution of the Society of Jesus, the Capuchin Peter Helbron, the founder of the Church at Buffalo and many other places, writes to Bishop Carroll from Pittsburg under date of November 1st, 1805: "Concerning Mr. Flynn." *Est vir nullius resolutionis*: he left me at Buffalo, when the Congregation bought a place on purpose for the priest, which is not prepared yet, and will not so soon be ready to receive the priest. Mr. Flynn went down the River Ohio, perhaps to the Monks of La Trappe. . . . He was about five weeks with me without celebrating, and preaching but once. I promised to the faithful in the wilderness to come back again."<sup>9</sup>

On October 22nd, 1806, he wrote to Carroll: "Mr. Flynn is gone down the river to the Trappists." At that time the Trappists had their establishment on Pottingers Creek, Ky.<sup>10</sup> Father Helbron was, therefore, mistaken about the destination of Father Flynn. Not to the Trappists did he go, but to St. Louis. On January 1st, 1807, Father Charles Nerineckx wrote a long Latin letter to Archbishop Carroll in which he alludes to some unhappy priests, among them Father Flynn, having come without credentials from the Bishop of Baltimore, yet exercising priestly functions. "With the consent of Rev. Father Badin," writes Father

---

<sup>8</sup> A Letter of Flynn to Bishop Carroll, dated November 8, 1806, of which a passage is printed in Shea's "Life of Carroll," p. 595 gives the same information.

<sup>9</sup> Helbron, Peter, "Baptismal Register at Sportman's Hall," in "Records of American Catholic Society," vol. XXVI, p. 374.

<sup>10</sup> Nerineckx to Carroll, printed in "Catholic Historical Review," vol. VI, pp. 83 and 84.

Nerinecx," he (Father Flynn) had preached several sermons and visited a number of missions, but heard only a few confessions. I should judge he had better remain in the Trappist Monastery. From his letters we learn that at St. Louis or some other place in Louisiana, he introduced himself as pastor, or rather, was introduced by laymen, although, to judge more mildly, we must suppose that he had jurisdiction from the Vicar-General there. May God grant that this matter have no sad end." Now, whatever we may hold in regard to these reports, partly based on mere hear-say, one thing is certain, that Father Helbron's judgment as to Father Flynn was correct "*Est vir nullius resolutionis*," he was a man of no constancy of purpose.

The contract which Father Flynn made with the Church-wardens of St. Louis, was approved by the Congregation in public session on November 23, 1806. The preamble states, that Father Flynn was sent to St. Louis by Father Maxwell, Curé of Ste. Genevieve:

First, the very Reverend Father Thomas Flynn binds himself to all the citizens of this parish to serve them in his ministry for the time and space of one year to count from the first day of the month of next December, and to finish on the same day of next year, 1807, during all this time to exercise the sacerdotal functions in the aforesaid Parish excepting only the last Sunday of each month, to have the faculty of serving the parishoners of St. Ferdinand and St. Charles, where the Reverend Father will be able to exercise his ministry.

Secondly, if it should happen, that the last Sunday of some month of the year be a great feast, then the Reverend Father Thomas Flynn will not be permitted to absent himself from this parish to serve the others; he will then take the following Sunday to discharge his duties in the villages of St. Ferdinand and St. Charles.

Thirdly, The Reverend Father Flynn will have the kindness to say the Mass at nine o'clock in the summer, that is to say, from the first of April to the first of October, and he will say it at ten o'clock in the winter that is to say, from the first of October to the first of April.

Fourthly, The Reverend Father obliges himself to instruct the children of this city belonging to the parish in the doctrine necessary for the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman state, every Sunday after Vespers, and during the time of Lent to put the young people in the proper disposition to approach the sacraments.

Fifthly, The Reverend Father Flynn obliges himself to visit the sick of the Parish when he will be requested and to assist them by his ministry at all times.

Sixthly, And we citizens of this Parish in our turn oblige ourselves towards the Reverend Father Thomas Flynn to furnish him a sum af 360 piasters in current money, that is to say, in skins of the deer at the rate of 40 sols the pound, or in soft wheat, a piaster per minot (39 litres)"

which sum will be placed in the hand of the church wardens in charge to be at the disposal of the said Reverend Father Flynn, and that to compensate him for his trouble and care in the exercise of his ministry. And in case of any private individual failing to satisfy his engagement, — for that which concerns his obligation, — the warden in charge is authorized by each of us to follow up the debtor with the rigor of the law.”<sup>11</sup>

In addition to his salary Father Flynn was to receive four dollars for every burial of an adult, two dollars for burial of a child, three dollars for every High-Mass, and five dollars for every marriage ceremony performed.

The parishioners subscribed at this meeting or soon after, the sum of \$331.75. Probably every parishioners name is affixed to the document, either in his own hand or by mark.

On January 8th, 1808, Father Flynn resigned his parochial charges at St. Louis and St. Ferdinand and wandered on, we know not where. The records of St. Louis show that Father Flynn baptized eighty-eight whites, eleven negroes, and one Indian, and solemnized eleven marriages of whites, and buried thirty whites and nine negroes. From the day of Father Flynn’s departure in 1808, until the arrival of Father De Andreis in 1818, that is, for fully ten years the parish of St. Louis had no pastor, but was visited, at irregular intervals, by Father James Maxwell of Ste. Genevieve, Fathers Urban Guillet, Joseph Mary Dunand and Bernard Langlois, all Trappists from Monk’s Mound, and Father Francis Savine from Cahokia.

Father Savine after serving the Church on occasional visits since December 11th, 1811, eventually took full and exclusive charge by an agreement with the Church-wardens, dated St. Louis, May 29th, 1814: “For and in consideration of a sufficient sum I have received from the faithful of this parish, as well as the assurances of other considerations, I oblige myself to discharge the spiritual duties as Curé of the Church of St. Louis every third Sunday until the end of April of next year 1815.”<sup>12</sup> The document was signed by Francis Savine, Priest. This arrangement with the Church-wardens was continued until October 1817. The Baptisms during the period numbered two hundred and fifty whites, seventy-three negroes, two Indians: the marriages ninety-one white couples and two negroes. The Burials, mostly performed by Trudeau as chanter of the Church, by Jean Louis Mave, sacristan, and by Samuel Solomon and Patrick Lee as Church Wardens. These minor officers of the Parish also certified to all the burials.

---

<sup>11</sup> The original of this contract between Father Thomas Flynn and the St. Louis Church-Wardens is preserved in the Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>12</sup> Register of the meetings of the Parish of St. Louis. MS in Archives of Archdiocese of St. Louis.

## FATHER DUNAND AND HIS TRAPPIST BRETHREN

In the early Records of the Church of St. Louis three names of Trappist Monks occur at frequent intervals, Urban Guillet, Abbot, Joseph Marie Dunand, Prior, and Bernard Langlois. Of these three priests Father Dunand, or the Prior, as he was usually called, is by far the most important in the history of the diocese of St. Louis. Legends have entwined themselves around the memory of this strange figure and his still stranger career. There was a touch of the mysterious in the sudden appearance of this white-robed monk in such widely separated localities as Pottinger's Creek, and Casey's Creek in Kentucky, Kaskaskia and Cahokia, in Illinois, Prairie du Chien in Wisconsin, St. Louis, Florissant and the Barrens in Missouri, always bent on winning souls for Christ. Father Dunand was certainly one of the most interesting, as well as heroic figures of our early days of struggle and self-sacrifice, a name worthy of a bright page in the records of the unforgotten past.<sup>1</sup>

Father Dunand did not come alone to the Illinois Country, but as the second in authority of a religious community of priests, brothers and laymen in their employ or under their instruction; but even after all his brethren of the Order had withdrawn from the country, he alone remained on the mission in the wilderness from 1807 to 1820.

Joseph Marie Dunand was born April 22nd, 1774 at Chapelle les Rennes in Lorraine. His childhood fell amid days of civil and religious strife.

The perfervid words of the Declaration of Independence had found a glad response in every nook and corner of olden France. The soldiers of the French regiments that had so bravely fought under Washington, as General in Chief, on their return, spread far and wide the cry of the new democracy, "liberty, equality, fraternity,"; and the youthful Dunand felt its wild charm. He became a grenadier in the republican army of France. But the fond dream was rudely dispelled. The Committee of Public Safety waged a relentless war against the faithful adherents of the Church, as well as against the royalists. The grenadiers of Dunand's

---

<sup>1</sup> A number of our best historical writers have devoted deep attention to the Trappish Colony of Abbot Urban and Prior Dunand. Bishop Martin Spalding in his "Sketches of Kentucky;" Flick, in "Records of the American Catholic Historical Society," vol. I; Maes in his "Life of Father Nerinckx;" Webb, "History of Catholicity in Kentucky," and Garraghan in the "Records of American Catholic Historical Society." The so-called "Diary of Father Joseph Dunand" was also published in the Records, vol. XXVI.

Company were one day ordered to shoot a priest. Against this act of sacrilege his better feelings revolted: that very day he fled from his native France and found safety in Switzerland.

Under the influence of the horrors he had witnessed the young man sought admission to the strictest Order in the Church, the Community of the Trappists, in the Abbey of Val Sainte near Freiburg.

When in 1791 a republican army invaded Switzerland the inmates and dependants of the Abbey, about 250 persons, fled to various parts of Germany, from there some took passage to America, others to Russia, and others returned to Val Sainte. It was in this last refuge of peace that the youthful Dunand spent the years of his novitiate, and was raised to the holy priesthood.

On the 3rd day of February, 1805, Father Dunand started with Brother Ignatius on his voyage to the United States, where a new settlement of the Trappists had been founded three years previous, with about twenty-seven members, under the leadership of Abbot Urban Guillet.

Father Dunand and his companion were stopped on the frontiers of France, by the chief of the Custom House, an apostate priest, who treated them with great severity, but at last forwarded them to Amsterdam.

On May 20th, 1805, they embarked on an American vessel, and on August 14th, arrived at Baltimore. Here they were received by Abbot Urban and with him they set out for Kentucky, where the new Monastery was situated. But alas, instead of a flourishing community Father Dunand found at Pottinger's Creek only the sad wasted remnants of the first colony of Pigeon Hills, where twenty-one monks, priests and brothers, and sixteen laymen, had lived in Abbot Guillet's care. Sickness and desertion had worked terrible havoc.

Three of the priests had died soon after their arrival in Kentucky, and two more in the course of a year. The excessive hardships of the journey on flatboats down the Ohio, coupled with great austerity of the Rule they followed, certainly were responsible for this sad condition of affairs.

Father Nerinecx, who travelled with them a part of the way, is rather severe on Father Urban, the Superior of the Community. "In my opinion, Father Urban, is not a man in the right place,"<sup>2</sup> and it seems well to soften its asperity with the milder judgment of Bishop Martin Spalding: "Father Urban Guillet was a man of great piety, indefatigable zeal and activity, and of a singular meekness and suavity of manners."<sup>3</sup> It is true, the zeal for the rigid rules of his Order made him blind to the necessities of his subjects in their new and severe surround-

<sup>2</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," (Louvain, ed.), p. 292.

<sup>3</sup> Spalding, M. J., "Sketches of Early Catholic Missioners of Kentucky," Louisville, 1844. The chapter on the Trappists was reprinted in "Catholic Cabinet," vol. II, pp. 604-612.

ings. In an old world monastery, Abbot Urban would, no doubt, have been an ideal superior.

Father Dunand arrived at Pottinger's Creek near Holy Cross Church in Nelson County, Kentucky, on October 10th, 1805. The well known missionary Stephan Badin who, at the time was Pastor of Holy Cross Parish in the neighborhood, assisted the almost helpless community in every possible way. Father Dunand also was attacked by the fever on the very day of his arrival, and struggled for four months between life and death. But God had further work for him to do. Scarcely had he gained sufficient strength when he set out with some of his brethren to found a new establishment of his Order at a place called Casey's Creek, the very place of which Father Nerinckx once wrote: "I lately visited my St. Bernard's parish and stopped over night with the admirable Monks of La Trappe. I found fourteen members in the stable. That structure, which is not entirely rainproof, is dormitory, refectory and church. A space is set apart for the lay-brothers, and there is a small apartment for storing provisions, in which I slept with my guide.

The Fathers and Brothers sleep on the bare floor; I had a bag of oats to rest on."<sup>4</sup>

Father Dunand, however, could not be discouraged by such trivial circumstances. Referring to Pigeon's Hills, he says: "There were not more than seven Catholic families there. We built a little chapel in which to say Mass, and the Catholics and some Protestants were present on Sundays and Feastdays. I was perfectly content in this new establishment, and counted on having found my abode of peace, but Divine Providence had many other hardships in store for me."<sup>5</sup> Father Dunand was not mistaken in this: the restless spirit of Urban, the Abbot, fell upon a new plan. The Indians along the borders of the Mississippi had invited him to their beautiful country, and promised to send their children to him for instruction, if he would come. The thought of the conversion of these poor heathen children of the wilderness fell like consuming fire into the good Abbot's soul. He resolved at once to transfer his entire community to Upper Louisiana. The exact location was to be determined later on. With Father Dunand, the Prior, and one lay-brother, Dom Urban started on the perilous journey in the depth of winter, heedless of all things but his Indian project.

Of the hardships and dangers of this overland trip on foot from Kentucky to St. Louis, Father Dunand gives us a few thrilling incidents. "During this expedition I was also obliged to carry my own provisions. Even at that, I was exposed to starvation in this vast wilderness. The cold was extreme; the rivers were all frozen and the ground was covered with snow. Wishing to reach St. Louis by Christmas Day, I

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Maes, Camillus, "Life of Nerinckx," p. 108.

<sup>5</sup> Dunand's Diary, I. c., p. 331.

took a guide whom I made walk before me to sound the ice. It is the custom for the traveller to supply himself with a pole which he carries crosswise before him in order to keep him up, should the ice give way beneath his feet. I neglected this precaution, wishing no other staff for crossing than trust in God.

"It was putting myself to a severe test! We were in the middle of the river when the ice more than a league in extent, cracked with a great crash. I could not help trembling, but my guide reassured me, saying that it was a proof that the ice was good, and this would only strengthen it. As a result my fears departed and the journey ended without accident."<sup>6</sup>

Wild and forbidding, as Southern Illinois then looked, and full of danger and hardship, as the journey really was, it must all have seemed but the proper setting for the wild and unruly population of its few towns. Roughly speaking, there were three classes: the aborigines, the Indians, whose native manners and customs had been depraved rather than elevated by the contact with the white adventurers; then the descendants of the old French-Canadian voyageurs and *coureurs de bois* mingled with a number of cultured immigrants from France and the West Indies, all now designated as Creoles; and lastly the Americans from the East. In his Diary, Father Dunand speaks with pity of the poor Indians, with love and admiration of the Creoles and the Catholic newcomers from Maryland and Kentucky, but with anger of the irreligious, contemptuous and persecuting Americans.

It was in November 1808 that the party had started for Cahokia, where they arrived after walking ten days through the woods. Dunand seems to have left the Abbot with M. Jarrot, he himself crossing the frozen Mississippi on the eve of Christmas 1808. But let the good Father continue the interesting story:

"Having arrived at St. Louis I found the district in a pitiful state. Deprived of priests and all spiritual aid, the morals of the people were entirely corrupt, and ignorance of religion was so general, that the inhabitants scarcely recognized the name Catholic. The small number of the better instructed rejoiced in their Faith. For the rest, some openly mocked at it and others behaved with perfect indifference. This fatal carelessness had its source in want of instruction. I am not referring to the natives of the country who, generally speaking, were good. It was through the incursion of foreigners that irreligion and licentiousness had made their way into this distant land. Divided in language, sentiments and interests from the rest, the aliens worked against the community's good. They were the persecutors of the priests. Having gathered a certain fortune by dint of crimes and injustices, and then having retired to the villages to enjoy in plenty the ease and pleasures and comforts of life, they naturally resented the zeal of the missionaries who exposed

---

<sup>6</sup> Dunand's Diary, l. c., pp. 332 and 333.

their baseness and disturbed their peace. The very sight of a priest was unendurable to them. It acted as a secret reproach to their consciences. Their hearts were closed to the truth which condemned them, though in doing so it repelled further from them those who brought them a message so important.”<sup>7</sup>

It is a terrible arraignment, the man consumed with zeal for the honor of God, makes of the great mass of the western people. Yet, there are many facts to substantiate his severest charges. Only one of them appears as an unsupported legend: No priest of that period “was put in a hollow tree and abandoned to the current of the Mississippi.” This legend probably originated in the fact that Father Valentin, the first resident priest of St. Louis, rather suddenly departed from St. Louis in a pirogue.

But, as Father Dunand says, the natives of the country, those that had enjoyed the mild rule of the Jesuits, were good Christians still: When He announced on the evening of his arrival that he would celebrate Holy Mass at midnight in honor of the Feast of Christmas, their joy was intense.

“I found the church well filled, despite the rigor of the cold. I felt great satisfaction in seeing so many Christians unite to celebrate the birthday of our Divine Saviour. The joy of these brave people was not less; for they had not counted at all on having Mass on this most solemn occasion. They did all in their power to induce me to remain among them. I understood better than they did how much they were to be pitied for having no priest, and so I was glad to accede to their request. My stay was not entirely unprofitable.”<sup>8</sup>

“This village, which has nearly a hundred and twenty families, is generally good. Everybody approached the Sacraments; nevertheless, I was forced now and then to use a little strategy and have recourse to pious ingenuity to induce them to do so, seeing that they were negligent.”<sup>9</sup>

One more sample of Father Dunand’s blunt methods:

“One day in passing near the prison of St. Louis I learned that they were about to hang a man who was a Catholic. I at once entered the jail. Six Protestant ministers surrounded the criminal. One of these wore a torn coat, a long beard and had a wild look about him. I mistook him for the criminal, as the latter on the contrary was well dressed in white linen with his beard newly cut. I therefore, said fearlessly, to the first, ‘Of what religion are you? He answered: “I am an Anabaptist.’

<sup>7</sup> Dunand’s Diary, l. c., p. 333.

<sup>8</sup> Dunand’s Diary, l. c., p. 334. Father Thomas Flynn had departed in January of that year.

<sup>9</sup> Dunand’s Diary, l. c., p. 343.

'so much the worse for you, then' said I, 'it is a religion that is worth nothing. Is it possible that on the verge of death you do not seek to enter the true religion?' 'I am not the criminal,' he quickly added as he pointed slightly to the condemned man, 'it is he who is the culprit.' I was abashed at my error, but, without troubling myself further, I promptly approached the man who had been pointed out and asked him some questions. I knew from his responses that he had never been baptized. Then I explained to him the essential things to know, above all the necessity of Baptism. He was quite touched and anxious to receive it. The ministers arose in indignation against me, immediately entered into a dispute and, Bible in hand, strove for four hours by the clock to prove to me that Baptism was useless. They were furious and surrounded the wretch merely for the purpose of keeping me away. All their efforts served for nothing. I brought water and, notwithstanding their fury, baptized him half an hour before they led him to his death.'<sup>10</sup>

But what was Dom Urban Guillet doing all this time? As we have seen, his purpose was to establish a Trappist Monastery at some as yet undetermined place in the heart of the continent. He had two offers of land: one at Florissant on the Missouri River, and the other near Cahokia. A wealthy Irishman, John Mullanphy, offered the one, consisting of one hundred and twenty acres with two houses; whilst Nicholas Jarrot, one of the most intelligent, wealthy and respectable French citizens countered with a tract of four hundred acres in the historic Mound region of Illinois.

The good Abbot was undecided: he entered into negotiations with Governor Lewis as to some grant of land to his community on account of its being an educational institution, but made no headway in the matter. On January 28th, 1809, he wrote to Bishop Carroll: "Both Governor Lewis<sup>11</sup> and Governor Harrison, are desirous of having me, and the habitants on either side of the river contend among themselves as to who will have the college. I have found on each side of the river a suitable site for a monastery, but have been unable to proceed to a sale, owing to the self-interest actuating both parties. Those of St. Louis say that the Post side of the river is unhealthy, while those of the Post say the same of the St. Louis side. This is why I contented myself with accepting two houses and one hundred and thirty arpents of land near St. Louis for a year only, so as during this time to get at the real truth of the matter and build at the place which will suit best.'<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Dunand's *Diary*, l. c., p. 341 and 342.

<sup>11</sup> Merriwether, Lewis, was stationed at St. Louis, General Harrison at the Post of Vincennes.

<sup>12</sup> Abbott Guillet to Bishop Carroll, January 28, 1809.

In the meantime the colony at Pottinger's Creek were busy constructing a flat-boat, with which they were to float down the Ohio and ascend the Mississippi. "They were" as Bishop Spalding relates "enabled to depart from Kentucky early in the spring of 1809; and they proceeded without accident to the mouth of the Ohio. Here they were delayed three weeks, awaiting the arrival of a body of boatmen, whom Father Urban, who had traveled by land to St. Louis, had promised to send to meet them at this point, in order to aid them in the difficult ascent of the Mississippi.

During their stay at the mouth of the Ohio the Monks landed on the Illinois side of the river, near the site of the present town of Cairo.

Here they felled and sawed timber, and fitted up a temporary altar, at the foot of a large widely branching tree, and there they daily sang the divine praises and offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the New Law. It was perhaps the first time that the voice of prayer had been heard amidst those dense and unreclaimed forests; the first time that the Holy Victim had been offered up."<sup>13</sup> At length the Canadian boatmen arrived, and took charge of the voyage, and towed the boats up-stream along the banks by means of ropes. This mode of voyaging consumed a whole month. As their final destiny was Florissant, the boat was towed up to the mouth of the Missouri River. Here an accident occurred which caused great consternation. "In attempting to draw the boat into the rapid current of the Missouri the towline broke and the boat shot rapidly down the stream. All the able-bodied men were on the shore and only the infirm and disabled were on board. The boat continued to descend the Mississippi almost an entire day, before the boatmen on the shore were able to check it; and several days' hard labor were required to regain their former position and many more to reach the nearest landing place for Florissant, the coal-hill known as La Charboniere."<sup>14</sup> The whole community arrived at Florissant before the end of May and established themselves in the old government house, which John Mullanphy had turned over to them, rent free for a year. There were only three priests; Father Dunand, the Prior, Father Bernard Langlois and Father Ignatius. The Abbot was absent at the old home in Kentucky, to take care of the horses and the cattle, which he was to bring up to the new settlement. When he did arrive on the scene in November 1809, he found his community shifted to the Illinois side, where Nicholas Jarrot had turned over the plantation of four hundred acres, with the big Mound and a number of smaller ones on it. But every member of the colony was attacked by typhoid fever. Dom Urban too had the fever when he arrived at

---

<sup>13</sup> Spalding, "Sketches of Kentucky."

<sup>14</sup> Spalding, "Sketches of Kentucky."

Cahokia; and exhausted as he was by the long, most tiresome journey, he was further depressed by the news that the Prior was ill, and that the whole community was near death's door.

Father Bernard,<sup>15</sup> two lay-brothers and the school boys, who had remained at Florissant, were expected to join them soon, as Dom Urban wrote to Bishop Plessis of Quebec an account of what had happened.

The land given by Jarrot to Abbot Urban seems to have had a clouded title. In order to attain a confirmation from Congress and to solicit an extra grant on account of his school, Dom Urban went to Washington. On May 1st, 1810, he wrote about his purposes to Bishop Plessis: "You are right in thinking that four hundred acres are enough to keep us occupied for many years, they would be enough for ever, were we to limit our members to a very small community without educating children. But, should Government reject our title, it will be necessary to move again."<sup>16</sup> Dom Urban writes that nothing was done by Congress in his favor, save that the title to the four hundred acres was confirmed.

The Trappists remained at what was now called Monk's Mound nearly three years. They built a cluster of houses with a Church, which they called "Notre Dame de Bon Secours". Henry Brackenridge "the little English boy" of St. Genevieve, now grown to man's estate, in 1811 paid a visit to Monks Mound and left us an interesting, if not altogether just description of the Monastery and its inmates:

"The buildings which the Trappists at present occupy, are merely temporary: they consist of four or five cabins, on a mound about fifty yards high, and which is perhaps one hundred and fifty feet square. Their other buildings, cribs, stables, etc., ten or fifteen in number, are scattered about on the plain below. I was informed that they intended to build on the terrace of the large mound; this will produce a fine effect, it will be seen five or six miles across the plain, and from some points of view ten or twelve. They have about one hundred acres enclosed in three different fields, including the large mound, and several others.

"On entering the yard, I found a number of persons at work, some hauling and storing away the crop of corn; others, shaping timber for some intended edifice. The greater number were boys from ten to fourteen years of age.

"I ascended the mound which contains the dwellings. This was nearly 25 feet in height: the ascent rendered easy by a slanting road. I wander-

---

<sup>15</sup> Father Bernard Langlois, a Canadian and Trappist, is sometimes confounded with Father Bernard de Limpach.

<sup>16</sup> Abbot Urban to Bishop Plessis of Quebec, May 1, 1810 quoted by Garraghan in his "Trappists of Monks Mound," l. c., p. 88.

ed about here for some time, in expectation of being noticed by some one; it was in vain that I nodded to the Reverend Fathers, or peeped into their cabins. I had the good fortune to be accosted by a young man, whom I discovered to be in their employment as a kind of steward, though not otherwise attached to the society. I experienced relief on being able to find one who was willing to speak: I made a variety of inquiries of him, but to very little purpose: he was however obliging, and promised to speak in my behalf to the Principal. In a short time Father Joseph made his appearance; I learned that he had the government of the monastery in the absence of Father Urban. He is a sprightly, and intelligent man, and, much to my surprise, talked with wonderful volubility, which excited in me almost as much surprise as Robinson Crusoe in his island felt, when his parrot addressed him. He invited me into the watchmaker's shop, for they carry on several trades, to assist in supporting the institution. The shop was well furnished; part was occupied as a laboratory, and library; the latter but indifferent; a few medical works of no repute, and the dreams of the Fathers, with the miraculous wonders of the world of Saints. Several men were at work, and some boys busily employed. One poor fellow, ten or twelve years of age, attracted my attention and pity. He was seated by a stove, making strokes on a slate, and appeared to have just risen from the bed of sickness, or rather from the tomb. Emaciated to the last extreme, his face was pale, cold and bloodless, his lips purpled, his sunken eye marked by a livid streak, and his countenance overspread with a listless stillness . . . I was pleased when I saw Father Joseph advance toward him with a tenderness and benignity of countenance, which does not belong to a monk: he endeavored to cheer him by speaking pleasantly to him, but the poor fellow had lost the power of smiling, his physiognomy was locked up in rigid coldness, which nothing but returning health, or the warmth of parental affection, could soften.

"Father Joseph inquired whether I had dined, and being informed in the negative, had something prepared. My fare was simple, consisting chiefly of vegetables; though not less acceptable; for it was given with good will. Having returned thanks to the Father for his hospitality, I took my leave. I learned that the family of the Trappists consists of about eighty persons, a considerable number of whom are not at home. The boys are generally American, the men principally German and French. They expect a considerable accession from Europe. It is about a year since they have been fixed in this place. Last summer proved fatal to five or six, and few escaped the prevailing fever."<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Brackenridge, "Visit to Cahokia, in 1811," is quoted by Scharf, "History of St. Louis," vol. I, p. 99.

Mr. Brackenridge's little slurs on the Monk and the "Dreams of the Fathers" and "the miraculous wonders of the world of saints" tend to lower our estimate of his fairness as an historian: yet in describing the things he saw, he gave true and vivid views. His opinions do not concern us.

"At the time the Trappists established themselves in Illinois" says Bishop Spalding, "the Indian war of the Northwest was beginning to rage. It terminated in the full discomfiture of the savages, at the famous battle of Tippecanoe, on the 7th of November, 1811. It is a remarkable fact in the history of acoustics, that the Trappists distinctly heard the report of the cannon fired at Tippecanoe, though they were about two hundred miles distant from the scene of action. A peculiar state of the atmosphere, and the circumstance that the sound passed uninterrupted over immense level prairies, may enable us to account for this curious fact, which is stated on respectable authority."<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Spalding, "Sketches of Kentucky."

## FATHER DUNAND THE LONE MISSIONARY

The wanderings of the early Trappists in America have been compared to those enshrined in the *Odyssey* of Homer. *Mutatis mutandis*, a certain resemblance may be admitted. Yet the quest for a new home was not without good results. Their nine years stay kept alive the faith in many thousands of souls scattered like sheep in the wilderness. It is true, they lost seven priests and eight lay-brothers by death: but as the bodily life was as nothing to them, compared with the life of the spirit, their failure seemed really a gain. It was not the American band of Trappists that shrunk from the task, but rather the brighter hopes of the General of their Order, that called them away to new and more promising fields. While all the members of the Order, both priests and lay brothers, thus returned to Europe, many of the young men who were attached to it, remained in America, generally devoting themselves to the trades they had learned among the Trappists.

Among them were some men of distinction, as Mr. de Hodiamont, one of those who witnessed the saintly death of Father De Andreis.

But, as in the expulsion of the Jesuits, Father Meurin remained behind to continue the work of his Order, so in the recall of the Trappists, Father Dunand obtained permission from his Superior to stay with the forlorn people of St. Charles, St. Ferdinand and the Barrens.

During the decade from 1808 to 1818 the Parishes above St. Genevieve depended for the comforts of religion almost exclusively on the Trappists of Monks Mound. Father Maxwell was glad to have their assistance.

On the Illinois side, there was only Father Olivier, with the accession, in 1812, of Father Francis Savine. It was probably through the influence of Bishop Flaget of Bardstown that Father Dunand, now universally called the Prior, was permitted to stay on the missions in Missouri until 1820. He seems to have resided, at first, in St. Charles, where there was a Church. In St. Ferdinand he was pastor in residence from 1814 to 1820. Florissant thus became, as Father Garraghan says, "the Fountain-head which dispensed spiritual aid to all the out-lying country." A number of the pioneer Churches were built through the Father Prior's exertions; at the Barrens, at Portage des Sioux, and Dardenne.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Father Dunaud's Diary, in "Records of the American Catholic Historical Society," vol. XXVII, p. 45.

Of the excellent Catholic Americans at the Barrens Father Dunand has given such a glowing account in his Journal that we feel obliged to transcribe it word for word: The first visit was made in 1814, to be followed by many more:

"I arrived at the house of Mr. Tucker, a good Catholic who had eight sons and one daughter, all except the youngest married and settled about him in good homes. We had traveled a long time on this marshy ground, in fear every minute of sinking with our horses, and surrounded on all sides by wild beasts and enormous serpents.

"But we were well repaid for all our trouble by the warm reception of our excellent Catholic and his family. I inquired how they had passed their Sundays and holy days, without Mass. They answered that on these days all the families of the district assembled three times; the first time they recited the prayers of the Mass; the second time they recited the beads or other prayers and followed this by singing hymns and canticles; and the third time some one of the better instructed taught catechism, not only to the children but to the married folks as well. I could not help admiring this beautiful arrangement, which the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of righteousness and simplicity, has established among these pious planters, so simple and so free from malice.

"I imagined myself carried back to that blessed epoch of the birth of the Church. I fancied I saw those first Christians instructed by the Apostles and so united by their charity, that they were but one heart and one soul. I would have liked well to have remained with such good people and to have chosen this holy spot for my home, but Divine Providence called me elsewhere. However, I did not wish to leave these virtuous souls without giving them hope of again seeing me. Finally to preserve or increase, if such were possible the concord reigning amongst them, I advised them to build a church.

"It is the one thing you lack," I said to them. "From it you will draw the greatest benefit. On Sundays you could all assemble there. Some one of your number of good reputation and who to piety adds an exact knowledge of his religion, could teach catechism or give some pious reading. You might chant the psalms, some canticles or hymns. All this would be a great aid to fervor and bulwark against Protestants who will not dare to attack you seeing you so well united. God, for His part, will bless you abundantly and when you are all assembled in His Name He will be pleased to be in your midst. I added as a last motive for their encouragement that, if they followed this advice I would return from time to time to visit them and celebrate for them the Holy Sacrifice. I then bade them good-bye and continued my

journey. But if I was not with them in body, my heart remained with them.”<sup>2</sup>

“On the following day they met to consider the building of a church. It was resolved to do so by common agreement. They chose a very beautiful site. Beginning the next day, some prepared the materials, and others worked at its construction with such ardor, that in less than two months the edifice was under cover. There were two hundred workers. When it was in readiness M. Tucker knowing where I lived, came to remind me of my promise. I had been taxing my strength too much, for I had travelled over a region of more than three hundred and fifty leagues visiting various settlements in the Upper Louisiana. I likewise had gone to visit congregations beyond the Wisconsin; and this new foundation which was in the opposite direction presented fresh hardships. But I had pledged myself, and it was necessary to add this congregation to those I already attended. I held for these good people a feeling of affection that attracted me towards them. Nevertheless difficulties and dangers of travel caused a kind of repugnance. It was necessary to cross several rivers which were very dangerous when high. However, I overcame all these difficulties. I did not wish to show less courage than the good old man whom these obstacles had not hindered from coming to seek me. The journey was laborious, but their joy at seeing me in their midst rewarded me abundantly and induced me to return there several times.”<sup>3</sup>

“I was so well pleased with these good people that I have since returned there four times a year, although they are forty leagues from my parish. The good old Mr. Tucker received me in his home. One day on arriving there I found him ill. I administered the last sacraments to him and soon after he ended his days full of merit before God. He left some valuable donations to the Church in his will.”<sup>4</sup>

It was through the agency of Father Dunand that the first Theological Seminary of St. Louis was located at the Barrens. But this good work will be duly treated when the proper occasion shall offer itself.

There is an allusion in the foregoing account to a missionary trip of the Father Prior to Prairie du Chien at the junction of the Wisconsin River with the Mississippi. It may well be that Father Marquette's eye rested on the tongue of land whereon Prairie du Chien was to arise in later times. Certain it is that there was a settlement of whites at the place in early times. But of a Church or a missionary establishment there is no trace in history up to the year 1817, and the priest's name who

---

<sup>2</sup> Dunand's Diary, l. c., p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, *ibidem*, pp. 46 and 47.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, *ibidem*, p. 48.

opened the Church Record with a large number of entries, and who opened and blessed a Cemetery and urged the building of a Church was our Father Prior, Joseph Dunand.<sup>5</sup> It was in March 1817, that Father Dunand set out from Florissant for Prairie du Chien, at the urgent invitation of the French Catholics who lived at that remote point. The journey was by canoe: five men did the rowing, one the steering. Father Dunand graphically describes the sufferings sustained from cold and storm and privations of all kinds. Thus he continues: "Every evening when we had put to land to pass the night the savages came to visit us; after they had gotten warmed up a little the chief came and gave me his hand, as did also the leaders among them. I flung them a piece of tobacco to mollify them, as they still were dangerous, although peace had been made.

"The thirty-fourth day from the time of my departure after great fatigue and hardships we reached the place where we sought to carry the light of faith. I was heartily welcomed by the people who had invited me to pay them this visit. The Commander of the fort, although a Protestant, honored me with a visit and offered me his services. I lived one month among these people who, until then, had been entirely abandoned. I administered holy Baptism to a great many, large and small, among whom there were many half-breeds and savages. In short, all day I was occupied in the exercise of the holy ministry. Three persons only refused to profit by my visit. Protestants came every day to the instructions; even the Jews were converted. The savages of different nations were exact in attendance of Mass; the savage women brought me their children in groups, some to be baptized, others that they might behold a Makita Courage; that is to say, a black-robe."<sup>6</sup>

Dreadful things were witnessed by the good Prior on this journey through the Country devastated by years of Indian warfare; and even then cruelties were perpetrated that made his stout heart quail:

"One day when again going up the Mississippi I arrived with my canoe and the men who accompanied me near a house which the savages had set afire and where some horrible cruelties had been committed. The father and mother whom they had scalped were lying dead before the door. Besides this, they had massacred seven children, most of them girls. The largest one they had put on the hearth of the chimney to serve as a log; two they had placed as andirons, two above crosswise and the two smallest in a kettle in which some one was making soap. The house was on fire when we arrived. I shuddered with fear lest the savages might still be there; but a domesticated savage

---

5. *The Catholic Church in Wisconsin*, pp. 850-852.

6. *Idem*, *ibidem*, p. 57 s.

who accompanied me reassured me by saying that, from what they had done on a similar occasion, it was safe to assume that they had promptly withdrawn. With much confusion, I reviewed this burning house and the bloody corpses, when a sight, sadder still, at least more apt to excite pity, caught my eye. A poor old man, nearly sixty-five years of age, came before me having been scalped and left for dead by the savages. "Father Joseph," he said to me, "save my soul! save my soul!" (speaking in the English language). We took all possible care of him and he became some better, but at the end of a few days he died."<sup>7</sup>

Prairie du Chien lay in the very center of these Indian disturbances, and Father Dunand naturally dwelt on them in his Diary at greater length. We will give one more incident to show in what a hopeless condition the greater part of Northern Illinois found itself just before the dawn of its christianization: "One day two Americans fell into their hands," writes Father Dunand, "and lest they might escape, they brought them to a savage village. While their fate was being decided they were laid on their backs on the earth; then their four extremities were stretched out fastened to four pegs driven very deep into the ground. One was condemned to be boiled in a large kettle and afterwards eaten; the other was to be roasted alive before the fire over which the pot was boiling which contained his companion. The first having been disembowelled was torn to pieces and crammed into the kettle; the other was stripped of his clothes and led before the fire from which the flames rose more than six feet. The Indians, weapons in hand, formed a circle round him that he might not escape. The women were in front, each holding in her hand a pointed stick with which to prod the unfortunate man and to oblige him to turn towards the fire. It is worthy of note that under such circumstances the women are far more cruel than the men. One of the women had her child in her arms. She was the most vicious of all. The poor creature who was thus toasting, unable to bear such cruel torture conceived the idea of making them kill him at once; and for this purpose grabbed her child and flung it in the pot with his companion. Seeing this, the savages clapping their hands to their mouths, cried out: "He is a hero! He is a hero! and the mother of the child coming forward adopted him as her son; in this way he was spared; but on condition that he recognize as his mother her whose child he had thrown into the pot. One need not be astonished at this, for it is the custom among these people for the woman to adopt as her husband or son him who has been the murderer, if he is caught. This is the almost invariable rule."<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Dunand's Diary, l. c., p. 60.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, *ibidem*, p. 54.

But, sad to say, continues Father Dunand, "There are, among these natives some white men more inhuman than the aborigines. The following story gives one instance of this. One day two young American girls, about eighteen years of age, fell into the hands of some Indians who carried them off to their camp. It is easier to imagine than to describe what was the fright and shock of these girls at the sight of these wild men, thirsty for blood and always ready to shed it. However, whether they were moved by the tears of these two unfortunates, or whether they were induced by some prospective interest, they decided to sell them to some white traders. While awaiting the arrival of the merchants who must have been at some great distance, they placed the two young women by the side of a fire. There they kept them, trembling from head to foot, more dead than alive, when a white man living among the natives approached one of them with a knife in his hand; and having laid her breast bare with violence, cut it off and roasted it. The natives were horrified at such barbarity; they pursued the monster to kill him, but he hid himself. Meanwhile the poor victim of so horrible a deed was stretched on the ground bathed in her own blood and overcast with the pallor of death. A savage, bending over her said: "My poor girl, we did not wish to kill thee, but since thou hast lost so much blood and cannot escape death, I will do thee a kindness." With these words he cleaved the head from the body with his hatchet. A merchant bought the other and returned her to her parents. I learned this tragic story from those who were themselves spectators to it."<sup>9</sup>

Such were the prevailing conditions in all the northern portion of the diocese of St. Louis before the coming of Bishop Du Bourg and his missionary band of 1818.

---

<sup>9</sup> Dunand's Diary, l. c., pp. 55 and 56.



PART ONE

---

THE ERA OF PREPARATION

BOOK III

*The Church of St Louis*  
*Under Bishop Du Bourg of Louisiana*



## BOOK III

### CHAPTER 1

#### BISHOP LOUIS WILLIAM VALENTIN DU BOURG

The twenty days from November 30th, 1803, to December 20th, 1803, were fateful for three great nations, France, Spain and the United States. On the first date Spain retroceded to France the province of Louisiana, she had received from France forty years previous; and on the latter date the United States acquired possession of the same province of Louisiana, bought from France, for the sum of fifteen million of dollars. All Louisiana was now a territory of the great western republic. Fifty thousand souls, mostly of the Catholic faith, had been added to the struggling Church of America. The change had come so suddenly, unexpectedly, that no one could realize the full meaning of the event. It was the birth of a new and glorious period not only for liberty and progress but for religion as well. It was not so plain then, as it is today, that the unification of the country, under the benign principles of the American Constitution, would cause an ever-widening stream of immigration to flow in and invigorate the Church and make it the mighty, self-sustaining body we behold with joy and pride. But the Louisiana Purchase was, under God's Providence, the beginning of this wonderful change.

As the death of Father Patrick Walsh, Vicar General of New Orleans, left the diocese of Louisiana without ecclesiastical government, Bishop Carroll of Baltimore resolved to act under the Decree of September 1st, 1805, and assume the administration. He appointed Father John Olivier, who had been at Cahokia till 1803, and was now Chaplain of the Ursulines at New Orleans, his Vicar-General for Louisiana. There was one man in the episcopal city, a man of great influence, who would not recognize the new authority, Father Antonio de Sedella.<sup>1</sup> The character of this Capuchin Monk is still an enigma. The people of New Orleans loved and received him, as one that stood in highest grace with Heaven, whilst he himself was continually opposing those whom the Church placed in authority. It is said that he was a Free-mason and at the same time an

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gassler, F. L., "Père Antoine, Supreme Officer of the Holy Inquisition of Cartagena, in Louisiana," in "Catholic Historical Review," New Series, vol. II, pp. 59-63. Also vol. IV, Old Series, pp. 52-75.

officer of the Spanish Inquisition. There can be no doubt, that he was a man of great powers of mind and of a domineering character. Bishop Du Bourg at one time called him the "inimicus homo," and at another, proposed him to Rome for the office of his coadjutor. Father Sedella was certainly not a "homo ecclesiae" whatever else he may have been. He held the position of Pastor of the Cathedral at New Orleans, with two assistants whose character was under a cloud. Vicar General Olivier endeavored to abate the scandal, but met only stubborn resistance.

Bishop Carroll in a letter to James Madison, then Secretary of State, bares the secret of his long delay in taking effective action. He had been informed by Cardinal Pietro, that "the acquiescence of the American government is necessary with respect to the measures to be adopted for settling the ecclesiastical state of Louisiana."<sup>2</sup> But the only persons for the difficult position of Bishop in those newly acquired parts of the United States were Frenchmen, who would probably not be acceptable to the Government, especially as Napoleon was known to be meddling with these same affairs. The unwarranted course of action of the French Government proceeded from the efforts of some Louisiana politicians headed by that "artful Spanish Friar, Antonio de Sedella," who sent a special mission to obtain a recommendation from the Emperor Napoleon for the immediate nomination of de Sedella to the bishopric. "But, the attempt has completely miscarried," wrote Bishop Carroll. This would throw some light on the motives of Father Antonio in his entire course of rebellion. Mr. Madison, of course, had no suggestion to offer, no criticism to make, but expressed perfect confidence in the patriotism of the Bishop of Baltimore. Cardinal Antonelli's suggestion was, that Father Charles Nerinckx should be sent to New Orleans with the rank of Administrator Apostolic and the "rights of an Ordinary," but the humble and rather diffident missionary would not listen to any such proposal. Father Lespinasse also was considered, and lastly Father Benedict Flaget. As the troubles in New Orleans became more harassing from day to day, Bishop Carroll bethought himself of the man that seemed entirely fitted for the magnificent opportunity of bringing order out of chaos in Louisiana, and place the Church there on the way of triumphant progress. It was the Sulpician Father William Valentin Louis Du Bourg, one-time President of Georgetown College, and Founder of St. Mary's Seminary, and other institutions of learning and piety.<sup>3</sup>

Father Du Bourg was a native of the Island of Santo Domingo, the place where the holy sacrifice was first celebrated in America after its discovery by Christopher Columbus. The date of his birth was February

<sup>2</sup> Guilday, "Life and Times of John Carroll," p. 707.

<sup>3</sup> Letter of Appointment as Administrator Apostolic, signed by Cardinal Antonelli and Archbishop Carroll of Baltimore in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese, printed in "Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, p. 56.

4th, 1766, twenty-five years before the terrible uprising of the blacks drove the French colonists from the island. Cape Francois, was the place of his birth, though not the scene of his childhood, as he was taken, two years old, to Bordeaux, the former home of his family in France. He made his classical and philosophical studies in the College of Guyenne in Bordeaux, and then went to Paris for the study of Theology. On October 12th, 1786, he entered the Grand Seminary of St. Sulpice and remained there for two years. Owing to the troubles of the period, the Registers of Ordinations were lost, and so, the date of young Du Bourg's admission to the sacred orders is not known. It was probably in his twenty-third year that he became a priest, that is in the Fall of 1788. His first position was that of a Professor in the College of Issy. But signs of the time were ominous, both to throne and altar.

On August 1792, it became clear to the priests at the College that they must fly for safety. Father Du Bourg escaped to Bordeaux disguised as a minstrel with violin in his arm. His journey to Spain lasted from August 11th to September 3rd. In 1794 he embarked for Baltimore, where he arrived December 14th. He was here admitted into the Sulpician Community, on March 9th, 1795.

In Baltimore the young Sulpician took truly Christian revenge for the sins of the negro race against his people of St. Domingo by devoting a good part of his time and energy to the instruction of the negroes and negresses in their holy religion. From September 20th, 1796, Father Du Bourg was President of Georgetown College. Early in January 1799 he went to Havana for the purpose of founding a College; but as he met violent opposition from the clergy of Havana, he returned to Baltimore in August of the same year. Here he founded a College for boys, which in the course of time became the Seminary of St. Mary's Baltimore, with himself as President.

One of his early triumphs was the part he took in the establishment of the Sisters of Charity, commonly called "Mother Seton's Daughters," in 1809, and in the foundation of their Mother-house at Emmitsburg, Maryland, in 1811.

Mrs. Seton, or Eliza Ann Bayley, was one of the noblest converts the American Church has ever gained. After the death of her husband, she felt that her vocation was the instruction of youth, but for a time she could not come to a practical decision. The religious life was her ideal, and yet her children had every claim upon her motherly care. It was Du Bourg's guiding and helping hand that enabled Mrs. Seton to combine her seemingly conflicting duties into one great undertaking for God's honor: the establishment of the new religious community of teaching sisters: "Mother Seton's Daughters."

From these apostolic labors and triumphs it can be clearly seen, that Du Bourg was a man of uncommon gifts of intellect and character, and

well able and deserving to fill the most exalted positions in the Church. Accordingly, Bishop Carroll on August 18th, 1812 appointed him "Administrator Apostolic of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Two Floridas." This, of course, included all the territory west of the Mississippi and east of the Rocky Mountains, from the gulf to Canada. New Orleans, the former episcopal city was to be the seat of the new Administrator Apostolic.

"The new Administrator," as John G. Shea says, "was a brilliant and learned man, but lacked courage and firmness."

To these undeniable defects of Dr. Du Bourg's character St. Louis owes a number of very important institutions, which in the natural course of events ought to have gone to the older and more important city of New Orleans.

This good came out of the evil that Father Antonio did, and the one weakness of Dr. Du Bourg's character helped to bring untold blessings to St. Louis. But we must treat all these events in an orderly manner.

The diocese of Lower and Upper Louisiana was, indeed, vastly rich in territory, but extremely poor in every other respect: sparsely peopled, the settlements widely scattered, the parishes disorganized, and the clergy greatly reduced in number and in discipline. "Many Catholics died without the sacraments," as a note of Propaganda states, "many children are unbaptized; others scarcely see a priest once only in a life time, marriages are contracted without the Church's blessing, and Christian doctrine is not taught, and such a decay of Christian life is to be observed, that within a few years the Catholic faith will be entirely obliterated."<sup>4</sup>

New Orleans is described as a hotbed of unbelief and moral corruption, owing to a great extent, to the efforts of the Freemasons, and other adherents of the godless philosophy of Voltaire, but above all "to the scandals given by some of the clergy."

Add to these anxieties the fact that an English army under Packenham stood at the gates of the city ready to carry it by storm. General Jackson won the victory, and Dr. Du Bourg's brave and patriotic conduct during the threatening danger, won him the respect of the victorious General and of the saner part of the people of the city. Even Father Antonio yielded a kind of recognition to the Administrator's authority.<sup>5</sup> But now there fell another sorrow to Father Du Bourg's lot. His good priests were dying, four of them, within eighteen months, only ten remained, three of them very old and decrepit.

<sup>4</sup> Souvay in "Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Du Bourg preached an eloquent patriotic sermon at the Thanksgiving services for the victory of General Jackson.

For three long years the Administrator Apostolic bore the burdens of an almost hopeless cause. The war with England was over, and the way to Rome, the Seat of the Holy Father, lay open. Why not appeal to Him for help, or for relief from his terrible burden? More laborers for the vineyard, and larger means for their support were the things he hoped for; his recall from Louisiana to private life was what he was prepared for.

On April 29th, 1815 Dr. Du Bourg announced his intention of going to Europe in the interest of the Diocese, and the appointment of Rev. Louis Sibourd as his Vicar General to administer the Diocese during his absence. In this announcement the Administrator Apostolic stated that he had all the necessary faculties for this appointment. This roused the fighting spirit of Father Sedella. He demanded to be shown the letter of Du Bourg's appointment, and the special faculties received; "otherwise," he said, "neither my honor nor my ministry allow me to comply with your ordinance." Dr. Du Bourg immediately complied with the Capuchin Father's impertinent request, by sending copies of the Pontifical Brief signed by Cardinal Antonelli, the letter of Bishop Carroll of Baltimore, which conferred upon Dr. Du Bourg the quality of "Administrator Apostolic with the rights of an Ordinary." And not content with this he entered upon a lengthy argument with a man who would not be convinced. Father Antonio's reply was a simple denial of all his Superior had written. Strange to say, the Administrator Apostolic returned to the charge in a letter dated May 3rd, 1815: The argument is clear, concise and convincing. Its dignified tone must have made some impression on the Pastor of the Cathedral of New Orleans, if the argument failed its purpose. Yet, the day of departure was at hand. On the 4th, day of March, Monseigneur Du Bourg sailed for Europe, no doubt, sorely beset by dark omens as to what might be done by the "inimicus homo." Landing at Bordeaux, in July, 1815, shortly after the battle of Waterloo, when all France was in turmoil, he could not proceed on his journey to Rome for some time. He therefore, wrote to Cardinal Litta, Prefect of Propaganda, that he had set out from Louisiana on an "ad limina" visit to the holy Apostles, for the purpose of submitting to the Holy See, the wretched condition of the diocese entrusted to his care; but that, owing to the disturbed condition of Europe, he was obliged to postpone his visit, perhaps for a long time.

After this introduction Monseigneur Du Bourg broaches his complaint against Father Sedella who refused to recognize the Vicar General duly appointed, a man of remarkable piety and prudence. The Administrator finally begged for a recognition of Father Sibourd's appointment, pointing out the necessity to abstain, for prudential reasons, from any reference to Father Antonio. The Cardinal Prefect may have thought, that a little more firmness on the part of Monseigneur Du Bourg toward

the recalcitrant Capuchin would have served his cause much better than this appeal to Rome. Of course, Dr. Du Bourg was supported in his contention with Father Anthony; and Archbishop Carroll was requested to notify the Catholics of Louisiana to this effect. Father de Sedella thereupon ceased to exercise the jurisdiction he had usurped; but did not cease to make trouble for the Bishop.

The Administrator Apostolic was received in audience by Pope Pius VII, who listened with lively interest to all that the American Prelate had to say about his hopes and fears for Louisiana. Men and means for a grand effort must be provided otherwise all is lost. The Holy Father assured him of his assistance. Dr. Du Bourg received the appointment as Bishop of Louisiana and the Floridas and was consecrated in the Church of St. Louis of the French, September 24th, 1815. The consecrating Prelate was Cardinal Joseph Doria. Father Felix de Andreis whom Dr. Du Bourg had met at the Lazarist Home of Monte Citorio, witnessed the solemn act. Bishop Du Bourg, as was his wont, gave way to his enthusiastic zeal by appealing to the Superior of the Lazarists, Father Sicardi, for the very best missionary he had, Father Felix de Andreis. At the very time of Dr. Du Bourg's arrival, De Andreis was giving a mission in Rome, with such remarkable fervor and success that the Prelate's mind was made up at once: Him I must have for the mission or none other.

Father Sicardi, however, was altogether unwilling to let him go to Louisiana. But, Bishop Du Bourg, feeling that the success of his own undertaking depended on the saintly priest, not only continued his importunities with Father Sicardi, but also enlisted the powerful intercession of Cardinal Consalvi, the Pope's Secretary of State, and at last appealed to the Holy Father himself. Father Sicardi yielded to the wishes of the martyr Pope, although with a heavy heart, and in an interview with Cardinal Consalvi on the 27th of December, made all the necessary arrangements with a view of the erection of a Seminary in Bishop Du Bourg's almost boundless diocese.

Father De Andreis' delight was not unmingled with fear, that he might prove unworthy of the call. The thought of his dearest friend, Father Rosati, a member of the same community, but then absent from Rome, occurred to him. He, the teacher, had several years previous, spoken to his disciple, that he should learn English, as they were to be sent one day to a mission where they would need that language. Remembering this, Father De Andreis wrote to Rosati, asking him whether he would accompany him on the mission to Louisiana. Father Rosati answered: yes, he would. Several other priests and clerical students volunteered for the mission, Father John B. Acquaroni among the number. On October 14, 1815, the first band of American missionaries were ready to depart with the blessing of the Holy Father, and on the night of the 21st,

they embarked for Marseilles under the leadership of Rosati, there to await the coming of Father De Andreis who was detained for the time in Rome. Many gifts in the form of vestments, altar-plate, linens, books, and money, were made to the new mission. On the 15th of December, Father De Andreis also took his departure from his brethren at Monte Citorio in company with Francis X. Dahmen, the future Pastor of Ste. Genevieve. They took the over-land route to Bordeaux, touching at Piacenza, where he was joined by the everfaithful Brother Blanka, and touching at Turin and Montpellier, on the 30th of January, 1817 arrived at Bordeaux. Here they were most kindly received by the venerable Archbishop whose guest De Andreis remained for four months and a half during the collection-tour of Bishop Du Bourg.<sup>6</sup>

The little community under Father De Andreis at Bordeaux represented only the first fruits of the new Bishop's endeavors. At Rome he had received a gift of six hundred scudi from the Propaganda. What other sums he collected in Italy we do not know: yet they must have been considerable. But what cheered him most, were the new members of his missionary band he recruited in Milan, namely a pious association of priests and students under Father John Mary Rossetti. Of these, Joseph Tichitoli accompanied the Bishop: the others, Father Marcellus Borella, John Rosti, John Bosoni, Peter Vergani, Angelo Mascaroni, and Joseph Pifferi, followed later, and labored in various capacities in the Dioceses of St. Louis and New Orleans.

At Lyons Bishop Du Bourg encouraged some pious ladies to form an association for the support of the missions, which in after days was known as the "Association for the Propagation of the Faith," and which for many years was the main-stay of the Church in Louisiana. But whilst all this was sufficiently encouraging, there was a dark cloud overhanging all the Bishop's hopes in New Orleans. "The news which I received from New Orleans" he writes to Cardinal Dugnani, on April 11th, "were such as to almost make me give up the whole undertaking. The enemy, on hearing of my appointment, renewed and multiplied his perfidious wiles. There is now question of having the State Legislature pass a law placing my temporalities under the absolute control of the men most strenuously opposed to Episcopal authority; and so heated are the minds of the party, that my friends entertain fears about my personal safety, should I appear in the city.

Your Eminence may easily realize what distress such news caused me. I must say candidly that I came very near beseeching His Holiness to take away from my shoulders a burden which, in circumstances such as these, appeared to me simply unbearable.

---

<sup>6</sup> A good and sufficient account of this period of Du Bourg's life may be found in the "Life of Felix De Andreis," by Bishop Joseph Rosati, pp. 51-72.

Unbearable it would be, indeed, Your Eminence, for the most courageous and fearless Bishop, if he were obliged to settle in the City of New Orleans, or even in Lower Louisiana, which is almost entirely under the influence of that wretched Religious. Nothing at all can be hoped there as long as that man is living. However, I feel how essential it is, not to give up the hope of bringing back some day by dint of meekness, that part of the Diocese under submission to Episcopal authority. But this consideration itself positively forbids exposing the Bishop to an uneven struggle, the inevitable result of which can be only the loss of the respect due to his dignity.

I see but one means of reconciling all the interests at stake, and I beg Your Eminence kindly to propose this means to the Cardinal Prefect and to the Sacred Congregation: it is, that I should, for the time being establish my See in Upper Louisiana, namely at St. Louis.

Apart from the peremptory motive which brought this idea to my mind, several other reasons seem sufficiently strong to recommend this measure. In order that I may work thoroughly for the good of my Diocese, I must establish a Seminary and primary schools; these new establishments ought to be, until they are solidly grounded, under the immediate and constant supervision of the Bishop. Now everything is against their being located in Lower Louisiana, whereas everything looks favorable to their happy development, if they be in Upper Louisiana: in the one place, morality is at an incredibly low ebb, it remains untainted in the other; in the one, the air is unsalubrious, it is pure and healthy in the other; in the one, real estate and living are very high, they are very cheap in the other. In case I were to settle in Upper Louisiana, I would appoint only a Vicar General at New Orleans, request His Holiness, through the Sacred Congregation, to grant him the faculty to administer, as I would deem fit, the Sacrament of Confirmation, as the immense distance between the place of my residence and Lower Louisiana would prevent my betaking me thither to fulfill this august function of my Order.

In this case, too, it would be necessary to postpone indefinitely the carrying into execution of the project which I have suggested to the Sacred Congregation touching the dismemberment of Upper Louisiana from my Diocese and its creation into a new Diocese."<sup>7</sup>

Bishop Du Bourg did not wait for an answer from Propaganda, before taking measures according to this plan. Less than two weeks after writing to Cardinal Dugnani, he made known to Father De Andreis his change of plans. He no longer intended that they should proceed to New Orleans, but to St. Louis, which is on the banks of the Mississippi River, about twelve hundred miles inland. The advantages of this change

---

<sup>7</sup> Archives of Propaganda, printed by Souvay in "Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, p. 63.

were great, both for the Catholics of that region, and for the Indians, who are far more numerous and more easily reached at St. Louis, than at New Orleans. So the first House of the Mission and its Seminary should be built there. But, as English and French were spoken at St. Louis, it would be necessary that the missionaries should learn English. The change of base surprised, but could not discourage Father De Andreis and his companions. "Now then," said he, "Let us take courage, gentlemen, I see that the English language will indeed be indispensable to us." Father Rosati recalled what Father De Andreis had told him some years before at Rome: that the English language would, one day, be necessary for both."<sup>8</sup> In the fulfilment of this prediction Father Rosati saw another proof of the fact that De Andreis was "a living saint." On the eve of the Ascension, May 22nd, Bishop Du Bourg arrived at Bordeaux with his band of young men, ecclesiastic and laymen, all anxious for their departure. The company was divided into two bands, the first one under the leadership of Vicar General De Andreis, and comprising Fathers Rosati, Acquaroni, priests of the Congregation of the Missions, then Fathers Caretti and Ferrari, secular priests from Porto Maurizio, Francis Xavier Dahmen, Joseph Tichitoli, Leo Deys, and Casto Gonzalez, Seminarians, Brother Martin Blanka, of the Congregation of the Missions, and three young laymen, who had expressed their intention of becoming brothers. The missionaries embarked on the American brig *Ranger*, on June 12th, after a touching farewell from Bishop Du Bourg. But the next day being Corpus Christi, and the ship being unable to sail, all returned to land, where Father Andreis celebrated Mass and gave Holy Communion to all. Soon after their return to the ship, a favorable wind sprung up, and the proud ship that bore the hope of the western world, started on its voyage. For more than two months this stout little ocean craft was to be their home, their temple, their Seminary. The Captain and crew, as well as the only other passenger, were non-catholics, but most respectful in their behavior. Mass was said almost every day by one or the other of the priests; prayers were said in common, lectures on Theology were given regularly, and the study of the English language was pursued with a zeal commensurate to the cause.

Father Rosati had also received the powers of Vicar General, but was not to use them, save in case Father De Andreis should become incapacitated. Thus the long and otherwise tedious voyage became a fit preparation for the great work awaiting the missionaries.

---

<sup>8</sup> "Life of Father Felix De Andreis," pp. 85 and 86. The best part of this chapter is taken, frequently verbatim, from the excellent article of Dr. Ch. Souvay, C. M., in vol. IV of "Catholic Historical Review," p. 52 ss.

Land was sighted on the 23rd, of July. On the 26th, the company landed at Baltimore. It was the Octave of the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul.

Father De Andreis tells us with what delight he first beheld the land of his future labors. But hungry and way-worn, as the missionaries were, they sought the hospitable home of Father Simon Bruté "the most holy, learned, humble and affable man, I ever knew," as Father De Andreis styles the President of the Seminary of St. Mary's. The Sulpician Fathers did everything possible to make all the immigrants feel at home in America. Meanwhile Father De Andreis wrote to his Superior in Rome about their safe arrival, and to Archbishop Carroll asking for faculties in his diocese, and lastly to Bishop Flaget at Bardstown asking for information respecting the remainder of the journey.

Bishop Flaget advised an early start for Pittsburg, and promised all possible assistance.

Henry de Torny

Rug Chouteau

de la Salle

Bern Pratley

Mannuel Lisa

L<sup>ieut</sup> Chouteau

Jenon Trudeau &  
J

Cherfanguin

of Sangrain

SIGNATURES OF THE PIONEERS



## CHAPTER 2

### CHURCH-GOVERNMENT BY MARGUILLIERS

Although the government of the Church is vested in the sacred ministry, the Pope, the bishops, and the pastors, in their respective spheres, the care of the temporalities, under certain circumstances, may devolve on the laity. There is nothing contrary to Catholic principles in the system of Church-wardens, trustees, or as the French expressed it, marguilliers, having the care and control of the property of a parish. Under the French and Spanish regimes this system seems to have caused no friction, a circumstance that may be ascribed to the fact that the power of the marguilliers, was circumscribed by the civil authority. The state paid fixed salaries to the clergy and contributed towards the erection and repair of the Church-buildings. When March 10, 1804 the flags of Spain and of France in St. Louis were almost simultaneously lowered, and the flag of the United States was hoisted to announce that Upper Louisiana had become American territory, the union of Church and State, that had obtained under French and Spanish rule, was at an end, and the Church was free to act as it saw proper, but also found itself thrown upon its own resources. The property of the Church remained with the Church-organizations as represented by the marguilliers, or board of trustees.

The office of marguillier was elective. It was the duty of these wardens, generally four in number, to collect all church-dues, to engage the lower officers, as the chanter, and sacristan, to keep the property in repair, and to pay the priests' salary. The appointment of the priest or pastor belonged to the Bishop.

Bishop Peñalver left his position at New Orleans at the close of the Spanish regime. Most of the priests of Louisiana also departed with the Spanish authorities. Only, Father Maxwell of St. Genevieve, Father Olivier at Kaskaskia, and possibly Father Gibault at New Madrid remained behind. St. Louis had no priest of its own, but only occasional visits of Fathers Maxwell and Olivier.

Under these circumstances it was quite natural that the people through their wardens took charge of the temporalities of the Church and even went so far as to engage a wandering priest, Father Flynn, as their curé, pro. tem. Parish meetings were held once a year, but might be called at any time; if circumstances warranted action.

Through the watchful care of Bishop Rosati the "*Register of the Resolutions of the Parish Meetings held in the Parochial Residence of*

*St. Louis, from 1806 to 1830*<sup>1</sup> were preserved for us. This Register gives us a fairly good idea as to the manner to which the temporal affairs of the Church were transacted during that period of transition. The very first item in the book under date of February 16th, 1806, contains a complaint in regard to the sad condition of the Church, the ceiling joists being in a state of advanced decay, and an order to the warden in charge to have the roof repaired and the building whitewashed inside and outside, out of the funds of the Church. A reprimand is applied to Mr. Bernard Pratte for having delayed the work on the roof.

Under date of the 16th, and 23rd, day of 1806 the engagement of Father Thomas Flynn's spiritual services is recorded.<sup>2</sup>

After this entry there seems to have come a pause in the transactions until January 21st, 1810, when the election of Antonio Soulard as church warden and of Pierre Chouteau as deputy warden is recorded. As no accounting for the year 1808 had been made by Warden M. Didier, such an accounting of Church-funds was ordered. "It was further unanimously resolved that the Tariff must henceforth be paid in specie: in consequence it will be diminished by one half, except for the sexton, to whom a piaster (one dollar) will be allowed for a large grave, and seventy five sols (cents) for a small one. It was also resolved that the annual salary of the chanter will be reduced to sixty piasters in place of one hundred and twenty. The rent for the pews will also be payable in piasters, by reducing the price by one half, and they will henceforth be computed in specie."<sup>3</sup>

On July 22nd, 1810 the following inventory of articles belonging to the Church of St. Louis was recorded: A silver monstrance; two chalices and their patens; a ciborium and its cover in gold; two silver cruets: two boxes of sacred oil and its case of red velvet, and one in tin for the Host; sixteen brass candleholders and ten in wood; two buffets; a small box containing a silver plate; two canopies; an ivory crucifix in a gilt frame out of repair, a pillow of black plush; a bad carpet; a missal and its stand; a gradual; a Gospel-book; three antiphon books; a censor; a banner; a brass crucifix; a lead crucifix; a brass dish for the cruets; two small bells for the Mass; an incense box for the incense and the spoon; a large flambeau on a triangle in wood; a little kettle; a holy water font in marble mounted on a wooden stand; an armchair; benches; chairs; altar cards, three inferior cassocks; two good cassocks; five gowns of cloth; seven cleric surplices; three altar cards; a tin lantern; eight albs; two old square caps; two albs; eight large surplices; a table; three Communion cloths; six altar cloths; four napkins for the blessed bread, a veil; six amices; eight burses; a chalice case; twenty-one purificators;

1 Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

2 Cf. Chapter 2 of Book II, of this history.

3 Shaved deerskins seem to have been discounted 50%.

fifteen corporals; ten finger towels; a box and a few ribbons; a chalice case; two girdles; a rug; a pall; four altar laces; a surplice; thirteen chasubles, with stoles, maniples and veils; three copes; a pascal candle and flambeau; two altar stones; a box of candles; a bell for the belfry and cord; a lantern in church; a heater belonging to Mr. Didier; a ladder; a host iron; a portable piece.

These articles of the above inventory were in the care of the warden in charge.

St. Louis, July 22nd, 1810.

“On February 17th, 1812 the majority of the faithful of this parish being assembled at the parsonage elected ‘M. Antoine D. Enjen as warden by a majority of thirty-one votes.’ ”

“On the same day it was unanimously decided that on St. John’s day, the coming June, all the pews of the Church will be put up for sale and adjudged in piasters and not otherwise. It was further agreed that the salary of the Curé will be one hundred and seventy-five piasters per annum, and a residence in the parsonage. On the motion concerning the salary of the sexton it was resolved that the sum of fifty sols (cents) shall be allowed him for each house, which sum will be paid him by the proprietors of said houses who are Catholics.”

“The warden in charge was ordered to apportion as justly as possible, the sum required for the priest’s salary of 175 among the various families of the parish.”

The Curé mentioned here was Father Francis Savine.

On January 14th, 1813 the parishioners elected Samuel Solomon as warden for 1814, and assistant to the warden of the present year, Antoine D’Enjen. In 1812, Father William Du Bourg was sent by Bishop Carroll to New Orleans as Administrator Apostolic of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas. This included all the territory west of the Mississippi and east of the Rocky Mountains. St. Louis, therefore, came under the jurisdiction of the Administrator Apostolic, soon to be made Bishop Du Bourg of Upper and Lower Louisiana.

On November 14th, 1813 the parishioners of St. Louis appointed a Committee for the purpose of asking the Bishop for a resident priest. The members were: August Chouteau, Charles Gratiot, Gregoire Sarpy, Bernard Pratte and Andre Landreville.

On January 9th, of the following year, Antoine Saugrain was elected Warden for 1815, and assistant to Samuel Solomon, the warden for 1814.

It was on May 29th, 1814 the Father Francis Savine, Curé of Cahokia obliged himself to discharge the spiritual duties as Curé of the Church of St. Louis every third Sunday until the end of April 1815, a promise that was extended to October 1817, when Father Henry Pratte

came up from St. Genevieve to prepare the place for Bishop Du Bourg's coming.

On January 8th, 1815 Patrick Lee was elected assistant warden of Antoine Saugrain the warden in charge.

On February 25th, 1816 Baptiste Belcour was elected warden for 1817, and assistant of Patrick Lee, warden for the present year.

On January 12th, 1817, Antoine Chenier was elected warden for 1818, and assistant to Baptiste Belcour, warden for 1817.

On January 4th, 1818 Bernard Sarpy was elected warden for 1819, and assistant to Antoine Chenier warden for the present year.

On the following day, January 5th, 1818 Bishop Du Bourg, in company with the Bishop of Bardstown, was to enter his quasi episcopal city of St. Louis in triumphal procession. There is no further parish-meeting mentioned in the Register until February 16th, 1819 in obedience to Bishop Du Bourg's call. But the only resolution passed by the parish-ioners was "to sell the old Church, that the profit may be used for paying a part of the debts contracted for the construction of the new."

We shall see in a future chapter how the system of Church wardens gradually proved its incapacity for constructive work and was finally brushed aside by the businesslike Peter Richard Kenrick.

### CHAPTER 3

#### BISHOP FLAGET'S INTEREST IN ST. LOUIS

Whilst the little army of the Lord was being brought together and equipped for the conquest of the Mississippi Valley, Bishop Flaget was busy in preparing the way for its coming victories. From the day of his appointment Bishop Du Bourg had conceived the idea of a division of this vast territory into two dioceses, New Orleans and St. Louis. He had spoken to his dearest friend, Flaget, about it, and had even insinuated that Flaget should be appointed to the bishopric of Upper Louisiana, that is St. Louis. At first the Bishop of Bardstown seemed inclined to accept this solution: but later on would no longer hear of the proposition.

On June 26th, 1816, Bishop Flaget wrote to Archbishop Neal of Baltimore: "According to your request I candidly pass my opinion about the erection of a new See at St. Louis. I firmly believe that the place is of the utmost importance for the good of religion, not only on account of the many Catholics that live there now, or of those that will immediately emigrate thither, as soon as they hear that there is a Catholic Bishop, but much more so on account of the many nations of Indians, that have never heard of the Christian faith. The Bishop that is to be sent thither must be accompanied by a good number of priests and zealous ones, because the country is almost destitute of them. A seminary and college must be erected in order to give to the Catholic religion a superiority over all the other sects that are moving every stone to pull down our faith and build their errors on its ruins. The R. R. Jesuits are certainly those that would suit the best in those quarters, for sixty years ago they carried on almost all the work at the missions both among the French people and the Indians, and their names there are yet in the greatest veneration. If the Holy Father was to send a Jesuit as a Bishop and give five or six companions, I do not entertain the least doubt, but in less than twenty years it would be the most flourishing diocese of all those that are in the United States. But if the Pope sends thither a Bishop by himself or with one or two priests only, nothing good will result from his missions: he will work as a zealous missionary, but he will do nothing as Bishop.

As to my translation to that See, if ever it takes place, it will be attended by a great many inconveniences in Kentucky, and Upper Louisiana will gain very little by it. Since I am in Kentucky, I have erected a Seminary where there are now seven young men studying divinity, and

five others more or less advanced in their studies according to the time of their coming; three Monasteries for public schools, in which there are about thirty girls that have taken their vows, or are ready to take them. Their success in teaching and instructing their pupils of every denomination has far surpassed our expectations. All these establishments, if ever I am ordered to go, are threatened with immediate ruin, because all the priests that attend them will follow me."<sup>1</sup>

It was only on the 8th day of August, 1816, that Bishop Flaget's secret misgivings were set at rest by a letter from Bishop Du Bourg that the diocese was not to be dismembered for the present, but the seat of the Bishop of New Orleans would be fixed at St. Louis or possibly, St. Genevieve. The reasons for this decision we have already heard. Bishop Flaget was well pleased and immediately began to prepare the way for Bishop Du Bourg and his band of missionaries. Concerning the work of preparation Bishop Du Bourg had written to Cardinal Dugnani: "However, Your Eminence, before going there, I deemed it necessary to make sure of the kind of welcome I might expect there; for I am told also that the coterie at New Orleans have spared no efforts to poison the minds of the country-people, and as much as they could, of the whole Diocese. In consequence, I have written to Bishop Flaget of Kentucky, who is highly esteemed in Upper Louisiana, and who, being well acquainted with the dispositions of the people there, solicited the erection of a new Episcopal See in that district; I have requested him to urge those people to express themselves plainly, and assign to the Bishop a maintenance independent from the caprice and humor of his flock. My opinion is, accordingly, that I should wait for their answer before definitely determining to go there.

Upon these various points it is extremely urgent, Your Eminence, that I should have, as soon as possible, the directions of the Sacred Congregation; for without these directions I act only at haphazard, being obliged to rely solely on my own judgment. I consulted, however, the most enlightened and wise French prelates and ecclesiastics; and all approved of my plan."<sup>2</sup>

In answer to his friend's request Bishop Flaget, through his Vicar-General, Very Reverend Donatien Olivier, sent the following circular letter to all the people of Upper Louisiana:

St. Charles, Ky., February 8, 1816.

Very Reverend Brother—Without further introduction I notify you that probably before the end of this year you will have a resident Bishop,

<sup>1</sup> Archives of Baltimore; printed in "American Catholic Historical Researches," vol. XIX, pp. 108-109.

<sup>2</sup> Archives of Propaganda, Le Codex, 3, pp. 372, 373.

either at Ste. Genevieve or St. Louis, whose diocese, if I be not mistaken, will comprise the territories of Missouri and Illinois, whilst those of Indiana and Michigan will, for the present, be added to it. This arrangement will not be completed, however, until all the inhabitants of these territories unanimously engage themselves to receive with due honor the Bishop and his lawful successors and to place in his hand a fund for the upkeep of a seminary. This notice is official, and I ask you to forward it to all the parishes, those east of the Mississippi as well as those on the western bank. In order to proceed in this matter with all possible prudence, I believe it to be advisable, that every parish hold a parish meeting to select a delegate, and that all the delegates repair on a certain day to St. Louis and there deliberate.

1. On the annual income they can promise their Bishop.

2. On the ways and means of securing this income. The mode must be simple and secured against all possible annoyance.

3. On the Bishop's house, its furniture and servants.

4. On a building for the seminary which must be near to the church and the Bishop, or on the lands which may some day furnish, a sufficient fund to educate a number of young men destined for the sacred ministry.

5. On the funds necessary to defray the costs which the Bishop may incur in coming to them, and to purchase the necessary pontifical vestments.

It would not be out of place to discuss the question where it would be more advantageous to erect the episcopal see, at St. Louis, or Ste. Genevieve. As soon as these discussions are closed and the minutes thereof made up, they shall be submitted to the Bishop of New Orleans and to myself for examination.

The remarks which we may feel obliged to make on this we shall send to you, and, as soon as all parties are agreed, the result shall be submitted to the Roman Curia, which is waiting for them in order to make out the Bulls.

The great temporal sacrifices which the people must make for the erection of the episcopal see are richly repaid by the permanent spiritual advantages which they will derive therefrom.

I am even convinced that within the next few years the population will be increased by immigration from other states, to such an extent, that in less than ten years your property will have doubled or trebled in value. It would therefore be a lamentable blindness against their own advantage and that of their posterity, if they would, for considerations of present difficulties, reject the favors now offered to them, and thus forever deprive themselves of the hope of possessing an episcopal see.

As the location of the see will mainly depend on the recommendation which, we, Mgr. Du Bourg and myself, will make, I am determined to oppose with all my power, the selection of St. Louis; if it be true, what has been written to me, that a theatre was opened there, which must neutralize the efforts of even the most zealous and most holy Bishop.

Indeed, what would it profit a prelate to inveigh ever so earnestly against the vanities, luxuries and intrigues, when the play-actors may preach in principle and in practice, the intrigues, the luxuries and vanities of the world? That would mean to mingle light with darkness, truth with falsehood, Belial with the God of Israel. And to that I could never give my consent. I trust that the citizens of St. Louis will enter into themselves, and will not, for the love of vanity and falsehood, reject the imperishable goods which must of necessity come to them from the presence of a Bishop among them, and from all the institutions which will be established by him. Admonish all the people of the various parishes, to bethink themselves, to bewail their sins, to purify their conscience, that they may, by fervent and persevering prayers, obtain a holy Bishop, who is consumed by the zeal for God's glory and the salvation of souls.

Order also, that in all parishes where there is a priest or a precentor the *Veni Creator*, together with the *Oratio de Sancto Spiritu*, be sung, either before or after Mass; or that, where there is no one to sing, the Rosary be recited. I request that the priests, once a month at least, celebrate the Votive Mass of the Holy Ghost with this intention: for their happiness will greatly depend on the choice the Holy Father the Pope may make.

As the parishioners are all well known and dear to me, assure them that I will unite myself with them in their prayers: for no one on earth can more strongly wish for them happiness in time and eternity,

In all friendship, I remain, your most devoted servant,  
Benedict, Bishop of Bardstown.

Vicar-General Donatien Olivier added the following words:

My dear Confrere—As I know how devoted you are to the parish entrusted to you, and to the salvation of souls, I need not ask you to carry out all the injunctions entered in this letter of His Grace.

Prairie du Rocher, April 9, 1816.

Your Confrere,

D. Olivier, Missionary in Illinois.

You will please communicate to me the result of your parish meeting.<sup>3</sup>

We have given Bishop Flaget's entire letter as it was read to the Congregation in Missouri. It is, at the same time, a monument of the saintly Bishop's childlike faith and a proof of his enlightened views as to the future glories of the West. The people of St. Louis have certainly never had occasion to regret the sacrifices their fathers were called upon to make for the purpose of a diocese in those ancient days.

In the meantime Father De Andreis and his companions had completed all preparations for their journey to St. Louis.

Travelling by stage, eight of the company crossed the Allegheny Mountains in the Fall of 1816. Rain was their almost daily companion. The roads became frightfully deep. An occurrence of divine interposition is related by Father De Andreis: "An enormous fragment of rock became detached from its place, and rolling rapidly down the mountain side, crossed the road at the very moment that two of our companions were passing. It seemed impossible for them to escape death or, at least, very severe injury: but they were preserved, the immense mass passing within a hair's breadth of their feet without touching them."<sup>4</sup> But the rain continued to fall in torrents. At a place called Bloody Run, the whole caravan was detained for three days: then the stage driver declared he would not go any further, and left the forlorn party at the swollen Juniata River. De Andreis sent a messenger across with the request for another conveyance to bring the party to its destiny. Then another delay occurred. The stage was already crowded. At last Father De Andries procured an ordinary farmer's wagon for their baggage, and, dividing his company into two bands, they all started on foot for the rest of the journey. At last on the 19th day of September, they arrived at Pittsburg, weary and footsore and almost dispirited. Father De Andreis confesses, that in the midst of these frightful mountains, the smiling picture of Rome, its churches and the friends he had left there, presented itself to his mind in glowing colors, and like daggers made him experience, all the tortures of melancholy.

It was on the Feast of the Seven Dolors that the missionary expedition reached Pittsburgh. Having found the Church of the place, whose Pastor, Father O'Brien, was absent on one of his missions, all

---

<sup>3</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>4</sup> Rosati, "Life of De Andreis," p. 113.

the priests said Mass, and the others communicated for the first time since the beginning of their journey.

On the 23rd of October, 1816 the missionaries started down the Ohio River on a flatboat. On November 19, they reached Louisville and resolved to await the coming of the Bishop at the Seminary of St. Thomas near Bardstown.

Bishop Flaget advised against going to St. Louis at that time, as there were no preparations made for the missionaries, and the missionaries themselves needed further practice in the English and French languages.

At Bardstown the good Fathers obtained a fair knowledge of what awaited them beyond the Mississippi.

On the 29th of November, 1816 Father De Andreis wrote to Father Sicardi in Rome: "The life of a missionary in this country is pretty hard. He must be constantly on horseback, finding his way here and there through immense woods, to visit the sick and attend the congregations. Sometimes he is obliged to go thirty or forty miles to see a sick person. The congregations are what we call parishes; the people assemble in cabins built of trunks of trees, laid one upon another, the interstices being filled up with clay, like the greater number of houses, in which the wind and rain enter without difficulty. These are our churches, without pictures and ornaments of any kind, provided merely with a poor wooden altar. They are scattered about among the woods, and on festival days Catholics, and not unfrequently Protestants, too, for ten or fifteen miles around gather together within their walls. All come on horseback, and it is really amusing to behold the surrounding woods filled with horses and to hear them neighing as if a regiment of cavalry were in the vicinity. Confessions take up the greater part of the morning. Mass is said or sung, a sermon or homily preached, and then follow the baptisms, generally very numerous. The sick must be visited, and the poor priest, worn out with fasting, fatigue, the journey and the heat, has at length to beg his dinner here or there. This meal usually consists in some corn-bread, beef-steak and water, without wine, vinegar, soup or oil. Sometimes he is obliged to say two Masses, and to preach in places far apart, for the people are very much dispersed, every one being employed in cultivating his own land. There are neither towns nor villages; all the work is done by negro slaves, who are very numerous."<sup>5</sup>

And again in his letter to Canon Martorelli, of the Lateran Basilica, August 24, 1817: Father De Andreis gives the following description of the state of the Church in America: "Picture to yourself an

---

<sup>5</sup> Rosati, "Life of De Andreis," p. 145 and 146.

immense tract of land, entirely covered with woods and forests, dwellings scattered here and there without any order, the towns and cities being few in number, which is very inconvenient on account of the small number of priests, and for other reasons of minor importance. The churches are situated in open plains, surrounded by the woods. On feast days, men, women and children, of every age and condition, come on horseback, ten, fifteen miles, or even more to attend Mass, hear the word of God, and receive the sacraments; so that, when they wish to go to the Holy Communion, they are compelled, notwithstanding the fatigue of the journey coming and going, to remain fasting until the evening, when they reach their homes. These churches in their outward appearance, resemble all the other houses, being built of rude logs and trunks of trees, which are never scarce in this country, put together with mud, and through which the wind, cold, heat and rain enter by turns. They are entirely devoid of ornament."

"Although, with regard to the population, these churches are few in number, still, as priests are likewise very scarce, every one of the latter has to attend to four, five or six of these parishes, or, as they are called here, congregations; and though a priest is sometimes obliged to say two Masses on one day, some of the congregations are whole months without a clergyman." "On account of the great distance at which the congregations are situated one from another, the missionary is obliged to be constantly on horseback, going here and there to preach, assist the sick, etc. Hence twenty, thirty, sixty or even ninety miles in one day are his customary rides. His life is, indeed, a hard and laborious one. Today he is in one place, but he knows not where he will be tomorrow. He depends entirely for his food and lodging on the hospitality of the planters, who, thank God, are delighted to show every mark of attention to a priest. Even Protestants will do all in their power to receive him well, though the best fare that he can expect consists of nothing but some corn-bread very badly baked, tough salt pork, potatoes and water. This is the refreshment that the missionary finds after a pretty long journey, having heard confessions the whole morning until one or two in the afternoon, said Mass, preached, baptized, etc.; sometimes at five in the evening he is still fasting."<sup>6</sup>

At last in September 1817, came the welcome news that Bishop Du Bourg, accompanied by about thirty priests, had arrived at Baltimore. Bishop Flaget with Fathers De Andreis and Rosati and Brother Blanka on October 1st, set out for St. Louis, a journey of about 300 miles, to prepare the people of St. Louis for the Bishop's coming.

---

6 "Life of De Andreis," p. 162 and 163.

Mr. Joseph Tucker served as their guide. The entire journey was made on horseback. Crossing the Ohio at Shawneetown, they rode through Illinois to Kaskaskia and St. Genevieve, and leaving De Andreis there in place of Father Pratte, they recrossed the river and proceeded by way of Prairie du Rocher to Cahokia, and thence to St. Louis. We will quote from a letter by Father Rosati, as given in the *Life of Rev. Father De Andreis, C. M.*: "The parish priest of St. Genevieve, the Rev. Henry Pratte, came to meet us with several of the parishioners, and as they all knew Bishop Flaget, who had given a mission in that place, he was received with many demonstrations of joy. Some of us were quartered in the house of the pastor, others in good Catholic families. On the following Sunday Father De Andreis sang High Mass and Bishop Flaget preached. He spoke of the object of our mission, which caused several of the principal inhabitants to assemble on two occasions, when they testified their earnest desire that we should remain among them; but one of their number, a worthy old man, told them plainly that they need not hope for that. St. Louis will have the preference, and we shall be obliged to yield; such, in fact, was eventually the case. "At length, on the 17th of October 1817, we arrived in the city of St. Louis, which at the period had no pastor; it was attended every three weeks by a priest from the other side of the river, Father Francis Savine. The Bishop and the missionaries went to the presbytery, which was an old stone building almost in ruins, divided by planks into two portions, one of which, the smaller of the two, served as a sleeping room, and the other was appropriated to the parochial and municipal assemblies. In this tottering house Bishop Flaget determined to take up his residence, and as there was no bed in it, some of the inhabitants prepared one for him. Father De Andreis and his companions had to sleep on buffalo skins spread on the floor, in the same room or the adjoining. It is true that the citizens were very willing to offer their own houses, but the missionaries concurred with the Bishop in thinking that it was better to be satisfied with a poor but independent abode, rather than accept the offer of any private individual. The parish church, situated very near the presbytery, was in no better condition. It was small, poor and falling into ruins. In a word, wherever the eye turned, nothing could be seen but poverty and desolation."<sup>7</sup>

"As soon as Bishop Flaget arrived at St. Louis, he interested himself in the affair entrusted to him by his fellow-laborer, Bishop Du Bourg."

---

<sup>7</sup> "Life of De Andreis," p. 168.

Having assembled the principal heads of families, he spoke to them of the approaching arrival of their own Bishop and the missionaries he was bringing with him to fix their residence in that place. He proved to them that they should feel very grateful for the choice that had been made of their city; for, in consequence, it would rapidly become not only the center of the extensive country around, but the center of all religious and literary instructions, when they and their families would derive immense benefit. He also told them that, since the Bishop's residence among them would confer so many advantages on their city, they ought, on their part, to co-operate in his views, and cheerfully give him all the help they could. He then began to speak of what it was most requisite to do first, and mentioned particularly the preparation of a suitable residence; and, as all these arrangements could not be considered in the first meeting, he held several general assemblies, at which he begged everyone to express his own opinion. During one of these meetings a certain Mr. L— arose and addressing himself to the Bishop and his fellow-citizens, said: I am far from disapproving the choice that Bishop Du Bourg had made of this city for the place of his ordinary residence. He is a Bishop and is, therefore, at liberty to fix his abode in whatever part of his diocese he may think proper to select; but, inasmuch as it concerns the inhabitants of St. Louis, I see no particular reason why they should contribute to the expense that he will consequently incur. The expense of a diocese should be divided among the whole population; it is not just that they fall on us alone. We have a parish church; we will give our pastor a proper salary; this will be quite enough for our share. If the church is going to ruin, it is our duty to repair it; and though we have no pastor at present, let one be sent to us and we will cheerfully receive him. But as to the Bishop, we are not obliged to do anything, because his permanent residence belongs alike to all.”<sup>8</sup>

Such were the arguments advanced, but his words made no impression on the assembly, because everyone knew that he was not actuated by genuine zeal for the public good. He was a Catholic only in name, who scarcely ever entered a church, attended instructions, or approached the sacraments; consequently his words produced no effect on those who heard them. On the contrary, all manifested sentiments of an entirely opposite nature, and willingly offered to contribute, both by labor and money, to whatever the project establishment would require.”<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Rosati, “*Life of De Andreis*,” pp. 170 and 171.

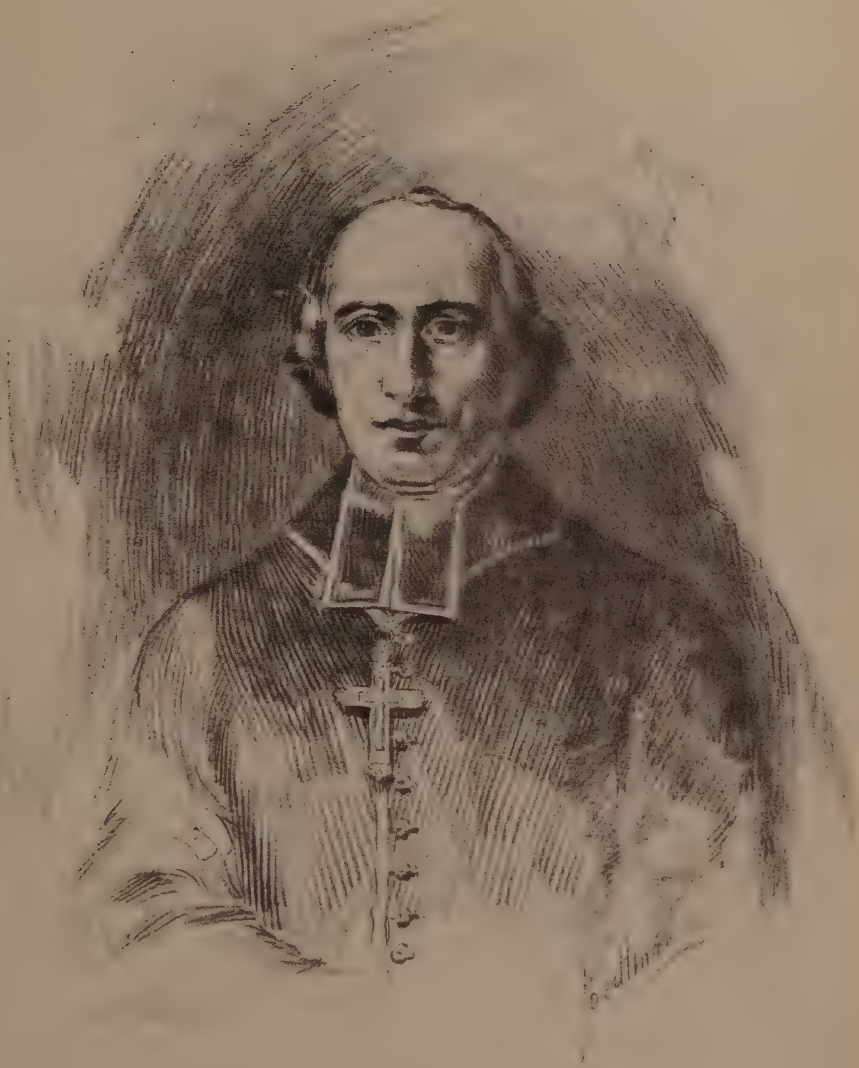
<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 172.

One of the citizens, an Irishman by the name of Connor,<sup>10</sup> contributed the munificent sum of one thousand dollars, and his example evoked a spirit of generosity such as St. Louis had never before witnessed. Among the Non-Catholics who nobly contributed to the cause was the future Senator Thomas H. Benton, whose son in later years became a convert to the Church.

Leaving Father Pratte in charge of St. Louis, and Vicar General De Andreis at St. Genevieve, Bishop Flaget and Father Rosati started on their return trip to Bardstown, where they arrived on the 6th of November. Bishop David, the President of St. Thomas Seminary, informed them of the early arrival of Bishop Du Bourg.

---

<sup>10</sup> Jeremiah Connor came to St. Louis in 1805. He was appointed Sheriff of the city in 1806, and served four years, not only as Sheriff but as Collector and Treasurer also. He laid out Washington Avenue, through the center of his property. Besides giving the \$1,000 spoken of here, he donated the site on which the Jesuit Church and College Buildings stood in the early days. Who this "Mr. L——" was we cannot say. We trust it was not Mr. Patrick Lee, the Warden in charge in 1817. Yet, as trustee for the people, he may have considered it his duty to oppose dangerous innovations.



+ Lud. Früb. Ep. Neo-auris .



## CHAPTER 4

### BISHOP DU BOURG'S COMING TO ST. LOUIS

More than two years had elapsed since Dr. Du Bourg's departure from New Orleans, June 17, 1815; eventful years and full of promise for his vast diocese in the far West. Father Sedella and his adherents were still scheming and threatening: but the opposition had a tendency to move the newly-consecrated prelate to ever new exertions in assembling the means for its final conquest. Heartened by his success in gaining the cooperation of the Lazarist Order, not only for the establishment of a Seminary, but also as a permanent establishment in Europe for recruiting priests for the mission, Bishop Du Bourg sought and obtained in Paris from the saintly Mother Barat, now Saint Madeleine Sophia, the promise of a colony of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart for his diocese of Louisiana. On his visit to Lyons he recommended his poverty-stricken diocese to the charity of the Catholic people of that great city and thus gave occasion to the foundation of the "Society for the Propagation of the Faith." Florence, Bologna, Bordeaux, Paris and a number of other places in France and Belgium were visited by the Bishop, and everywhere a generous response was made to his eloquent appeals. Money, vestments, altar-plate and books were gladly given by princes and nobles, to serve the needs of the American missions. The Holy Father himself, Pius VII, a number of the Cardinals, many bishops and priests made munificent contributions to the great missionary cause. On June 12, 1816, the first company of Bishop Du Bourg's missionaries, under Father De Andreis, as Vicar General, had been sent on to Louisiana, as the advance guard of the enterprise. Louis XVIII, King of France promised the Bishop free passage for himself and his entire following on the first ship of the royal navy to sail for America. Propaganda had been informed on all these matters: yet the Bishop's delay of going to his diocese seemed unnecessarily protracted. A rather sharp letter urged an early departure. It seemed as if the Bishop had fallen under the suspicion that he entertained greater love for la belle France than for the benighted land of Louisiana. Bishop Du Bourg was deeply hurt by this seeming want of confidence; but a brief explanation cleared up the matter to the perfect satisfaction of all; Bishop Du Bourg's work of preparation was now finished: the actual work of evangelizing the diocese of Louisiana was to begin without delay. On June 16th, 1817, he joyfully announced: "At length the long-wished for day is at hand: tomorrow we shall embark, and God willing, set

sail for America.”<sup>1</sup> But another involuntary delay occurred. The good ship, *La Caravane*, could not leave its moorings at Bordeaux before July 1st. The Bishop had with him twenty-nine recruits for the Louisiana Mission, five priests, four subdeacons, nine clerics, three Christian Brothers, four young men still in their classical course, and four workmen, who had offered themselves to the Mission. The priests were: De Crugui, Anthony Blanc, Auguste Janvier, Charles De la Croix, Secondo Valezano; the subdeacons, Bertrand, Portier, Jeanjean, Valentin; the Clerics, Brassac, Des Moulins, Hosten, Niel, De Pareq, Maenhaut, De Neckere, Perrodin, Chauderat; the Christian Brothers Audin, Fulgentius, Antoninus; the College boys, Barreau, De Geithre, Desprat, Magne. Of the four workmen we have but the Baptismal names, Joseph, Bernard, Isidore, Francis.

The voyage lasted sixty-five days, a rather long period of time, but very fruitful in grace to the ship's crew, as well as to the missionary band. Father Anthony Blanc, the future Bishop of New Orleans, tells us about a mission that was given to the officers and sailors on the *Caravane*. Every day a Catechetical instruction was given to all that wished to come; the Bishop himself made the opening address. On August 24 the Bishop said Mass and gave holy Communion to forty members of the crew, seven of whom were first communicants. Thirty-five of these men received Confirmation on the same day. Some of these men had neglected their duty for thirty years. All the missionaries had a share in this work, giving instructions and hearing confessions. Most touching was the parting scene at Annapolis, when all the sailors fell on their knees and asked a farewell blessing. On the return voyage a hurricane struck *La Caravane*, in which nearly all members of the crew were lost. From Baltimore word was sent to Bishop Flaget.

Whilst Bishop Du Bourg took up his abode at St. Mary's Seminary, (September 10,-November 4) some of his companions, under Father Blanc, were left at Annapolis, where they were entertained in the mansion of Charles Carroll of Carrollton. On November 4, the entire party, excepting Mr. Portier, started by stage-coach on their way across the mountains to Pittsburg. The dangers and discomforts of such a journey were graphically described by the Bishop in a letter to his friend, Father Bruté, dated Pittsburg, November 13, 1817:

My good friend:—What roads! What precipices! What break necks! I do not remember having endured, in my life, such fatigue. After walking half of the second day to avoid dislocating our limbs, on the third we could not escape the overturn of the stage which, that very day, was upset three times. When the first accident took place

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Propaganda, Archives of Propaganda, l. c., Cod. 3, Fol. 453.

we were all in the carriage, at the moment of the second, it was empty, and when it was overthrown the third time, all were in except Augustin, Mr. Blanc and myself. We had bravely made up our minds to foot the road. All our fellow-travellers at last took the same resolution. We happily executed our resolution, but not without incredible trouble. This third evening especially we were obliged, for the security of our luggage which had already been upset twice, to follow the stage more than three hours after sunset. Without a ray of light to guide us, we constantly fell into mud and water. When not in sloppy plains, we had to walk over slippery rocks which hurt our feet, while wild briars scratched our faces. I leave you to imagine in what a plight we arrived at our stopping place. We left there at an inn our two sick, Niel and Martin, with Augustin and our baggage. The two invalids availed themselves of a conveyance to come to Pittsburg. Augustin was the day before yesterday, forty miles from here, much embarrassed with the baggage which I expect with great impatience. I fear he cannot find a wagon to bring it to us. Our vanguard party, thanks to God, have been better treated than we were. They had, however, their share of trials, but with all their hardships not a fracture, not even a bruise. I did not feel myself incommoded by reason of my 130 miles walking. I would not, however, advise anyone to travel that road by stage, till the turn-pike, already commenced, is completed, which cannot be before three or four years. On horseback, on foot, these are the best ways unless one has a wagon or carriage of his own. What is most disagreeable about the stage is, that one has to start at 3 A.M., to arrive ordinarily at midnight and sometimes no sooner than 2 A.M., and thus has to ride in the dark over ways which in daytime, it would be rash to cross in stages. We find here in the attentions of Messrs. O'Brien, Ross and Beelen ample compensation for our past troubles. We are lodged all together in a vast house which these gentlemen have procured for us. William Valentin is our steward here, he acquits himself of his duties very well indeed. Our servants attend to the cooking. Several of us celebrate Holy Mass in the house, and the others at the Church, which is rather distant. It was only day before yesterday that our rear guard reached here. On Next Sunday I intend to give confirmation and Monday, if Augustin arrives with the baggage, we count on taking the Ohio. I will write you from Bardstown."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Letter preserved in Bishops' Memorial Hall, Notre Dame, Indiana, printed in "American Catholic Historical Researches," vol. IV, pp. 137 and 138. "The turnpike, already commenced but not yet completed" is the Cumberland Road, winding its way through Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois towards the Mississippi, was the first National Road to the West. It was completed in 1818. Cf. Archer Butler Hulbert, "Historic Highways of America," vol. X.

On the eve of December 2, Bishop Du Bourg accompanied by Father Blanc and two Kentucky priests, Chabrat and Schaefer, arrived at Bardstown and was enthusiastically received by Bishop Flaget and Father David, and last but not least, by the Bishop's own advance guard of missionaries under Rosati, who had anxiously been awaiting his coming since their arrival at St. Thomas a year ago. The Bishop now had but one desire, to get home as speedily as possible. Bishop Flaget was glad to make the journey to St. Louis to introduce his dear friend to the people of that city and to install him in his cathedral. Accordingly on December 18 the two prelates with Father Badin and the student, Niel, started from Louisville on the Steamer *Piqua*, in hope of completing the journey to St. Louis before Christmas.

Bishop Flaget's humorous pen-picture of the *Piqua* is worth quoting here: "Nothing could be more original than the medley of persons on board this boat. We have a band of seven or eight comedians, a family of seven or eight Jews, and a company of clergymen composed of a tonsured cleric, a priest and two Bishops; besides others, both black and white. Thus more than thirty persons are lodged in an apartment (cabin) twenty feet by twelve, which is again divided into two parts. This boat comprises the Old and the New Testament. It might serve successively for a synagogue, a cathedral, a theatre, a hospital, a parlor, a dining room and a sleeping apartment. It is in fact a veritable Noah's Ark, in which there are both clean and unclean animals;—and what is more astonishing, peace and harmony reign here."<sup>3</sup>

The travellers' expectation of a speedy journey were disappointed; owing to excessive cold weather, the navigation was seriously hampered by huge ice-floes and even for two full days the boat was stuck fast in the middle of the river. When on December 24, painfully the craft reached at last, the mouth of the Ohio, the prospect looked still gloomier; and indeed, as the voyagers rose up the next morning they realized with dismay that they had not progressed an inch. Unable to say their Christmas Masses, they resolved to make three meditations instead. At the conclusion of the second, the *Piqua* proudly resumed her course towards her goal. Slowly she plowed her way northward, and at length, on the evening of the 28th of December, she arrived at the landing near Mrs. Fenwick's farm, at the mouth of Apple Creek, where she was to stop a few hours.

There it was that the Bishop of Louisiana first set foot in his Diocese. Near the spot a cross prepared for the occasion was solemnly erected whilst the Prelates and their two companions sang the *Vexilla Regis*.

---

<sup>3</sup> Spalding, Martin J., Bishop of Louisville, "Life of Benedict Joseph Flaget," 1852, pp. 173 and 174.

At Fenwick's Father Badin parted with the company. Only twenty miles away lay the *Barrens*, where, some twenty years before, a number of his old Kentucky parishioners—as also were the Fenwicks—had come to settle. The occasion to see them was too good to miss: to the *Barrens*, therefore, he directed his steps, intending to overtake the Episcopal party a few days later at Ste. Genevieve.<sup>4</sup>

Returning to the boat, the Bishops “found the comedians performing a play—that is, engaged in a general fight among themselves,—until they were separated by the Captain.” At midnight, on the 30th, they arrived in view of Ste. Genevieve, and early next morning they despatched a messenger to announce their coming to Fr. De Andreis, the pastor for the time being in place of Father Henry Pratte who was in St. Louis to prepare all things necessary for the coming of the Bishop.

Two hours later, Father De Andreis, accompanied by some forty of the principal inhabitants, went on horseback to the landing with several young men likewise on horseback, and a carriage, to escort the prelates into the town. They repaired first to the rectory, where they donned their pontifical vestments; and, a few moments later, headed by the cross and twenty-four altar-boys, the two Bishops, under a canopy carried by four of the principal citizens, were, to the accompaniment of the peal of the church-bells and amidst the universal joy of all the parish assembled, and even of the protestant members of the community, conducted in solemn procession, to the throne erected in the sanctuary of the little village church. With that felicitous cleverness which always put on his lips the right words for the right place, Bishop Du Bourg opened his heart to his St. Genevieve audience, expressing his delight that he was at last in his Diocese, among his own spiritual children, and auguring from this happy event great progress for religion in Upper Louisiana. An enthusiastic *Te Deum* closed the ceremony, and the rest of the day was spent in receiving visits.

On the 1st of January 1818, the Catholics of St. Genevieve witnessed for the first time the splendors of a Pontifical High Mass, celebrated by their Bishop, who once more preached to them; and the next day, the two Prelates, Father Badin who had joined them after his short visit to the “*Barrens*” settlement, Father De Andreis and Mr. Niel, crossing over to Illinois, resumed their journey towards St. Louis. They arrived the next evening (Saturday, January 3) at Cahokia, the house of Father Savine, where they were welcomed with unbounded transports of joy.<sup>5</sup>

Monday, January 5th, had been fixed for the last link of the journey. Forty men of Cahokia, mounted on superb chargers, and

<sup>4</sup> Spalding, op. cit., p. 174.

<sup>5</sup> Spalding, op. cit., p. 175.

marching two by two in perfect order, led the pageant to the bank of the Mississippi River, where a boat was in readiness. On the Missouri side, a large crowd of people, in fact all the inhabitants of the town, Protestants as well as Catholics, were anxiously waiting at the landing.

It was a beautiful sight, the city of St. Louis in its early glory, extending along the river two miles in three parallel streets, each rising above the other. The bank of the river was high and composed of limestone. Most of the houses were built of the same material, some of them in grand style, and surrounded with galleries. Almost every house had an extensive garden or park, enclosed by stone walls. The country around and west of the town was one extended prairie, in which large herds of cattle were grazing. The number of inhabitants was said to be 2,500, all of whom seemed to be lined along the river bank, anxiously awaiting the episcopal convoy. At last the boat landed at the foot of Market Street. The episcopal party was welcomed by the happy multitudes in truly French style and proceeded to the "Episcopal palace," still a sorry looking, tumble-down house, in spite of Father Pratte's best exertions. Soon after, the two Bishops, mitred and clad in their full pontifical robes, came down the steps, were received under a canopy borne by four prominent men of the church, Didier, Pratte, Sarpy and Belcour and, preceded by twelve altar-boys, marched to the gate; then, turning northwards along the *Rue de l'Eglise*—now Second Street—they reached the door of the Cathedral, the rickety log building erected in 1776, and went up to the sanctuary, where a throne had been prepared, whilst the people filled the church to overflowing. Then Bishop Flaget, leading Bishop Du Bourg to the throne, and installing him in his Episcopal chair, congratulated him on his being in the midst of his beloved children. The sight of the Pastor, now at last at the end of his two thousand league journey, the view of the flock which he had loved so dearly in the days of their spiritual destitution, and the comforting thought they would henceforth never be in want of religious help, so enraptured the zeal-consumed soul of the speaker, the saintly Bishop of Bardstown, that he could not check tears of bliss and hope. For twenty-four years, the Catholics of St. Louis had known him, since the far distant day of his coming to Vincennes, his first mission; and they idolized him; but so delicately did he speak to them of their Bishop, whom it had been his role to herald, that their hearts were completely won to their new pastor.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Spalding's Account of Bishop Du Bourg's Installation and coming to St. Louis is based on the letter of Father Anthony Blanc, from the Seminary of St. Thomas near Bardstown, Ky., dated January 1818. His source was Bishop Flaget himself and possibly Father Badin. The letter was first published in the *Annales of the Association for Propagation of the Faith*, vol. II, pp. 336-338.

That this was no mean victory for the eloquence, and still more for the personality of the Kentucky Prelate, Bishop Du Bourg could judge better than anyone else. He had not been, indeed, entirely without misgivings; for he was well aware that the pestilential blast poisoning the Catholic atmosphere in New Orleans, had been wafted as far as St. Louis. But this was now past history. Bishop Du Bourg's own winsome personality completed the victory, so well won by the eloquent Flaget: "the mere presence of the Bishop," says Fr. De Andreis, "his kindness, benignity and, suavity of manner have dispelled the storm, dissipated, in a great measure, every prejudice, and captivated all hearts."<sup>7</sup>

Bishop Flaget's mission was now happily completed. On the Feast of the Epiphany he preached his farewell sermon, and the next day, in company with Father Badin, he started back for Bardstown by the way of Vincennes. Now, at home, Bishop Du Bourg, who henceforth signed himself for several years "Bishop of St. Louis," soon was to prove himself, in Upper Louisiana, the efficient instrument of Him "who commands the light to shine out of darkness."

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Letter of Mrs. Anne L. Hunt written to her father, J. B. C. Lucas, at Washington, dated St. Louis, January 4, 1818, with a postscript dated January 5. After describing the event, the postscript concludes: "Bishop Du Bourg is certainly more eloquent than the other (Flaget). At all events, he speaks more handsomely. All the people appear much pleased with their new acquisition."

## BISHOP DU BOURG'S DIFFICULTIES

Bishop Du Bourg was in almost every regard an ideal Shepherd of souls, of stately figure and manners, endowed with a voice clear and sweet as a bell, a frank open countenance, not without a touch of languor, as befitting his southern birth, at ease among the highest as well as the lowest, yet shrinking from intentional rudeness, because himself so perfect a gentleman, not strong-willed when he met opposition, but irresistible with those whom he knew to bear him good will, and above all a priest and bishop with the full realization of his high calling, such was the man who was sent to preside over the rising Church in the Mississippi Valley.

Very seldom has a Bishop been placed before such bewildering difficulties at those that revealed themselves to Bishop Du Bourg in his diocese of Louisiana. The vastness of the territory to be evangelized, and the sad condition of the actual and prospective population, are well described by Father De Andreis in a letter to Father Sicardi in Rome, dated February 24, 1818:

"This diocese of Louisiana covers an immense extent of country, and the labor that it will require will soon render it expedient to divide it; cities, towns and villages are growing up before our eyes with marvelous rapidity; emigrants are arriving in crowds from all parts of the United States, as well as from Europe. Ireland, Switzerland and France send multitudes of people to the smiling and fertile plains of Missouri, and in a few years the country will become so flourishing, that Europe will no longer excite envy. The chief part of the population is French (Creole as they call it,) and consequently Catholic, but without any religious culture, on account of the long period during which the place has been destitute of clergymen and of every means of instruction. One of the most respectable citizens said to me: 'If Bishop Du Bourg had not come in time to our relief, the last spark of faith would have been extinguished in our country.' But the French part of the population will soon be absorbed by the American and the English, among whom only a small portion are Catholics, but these are generally very fervent; the greater part are Protestants of various denominations. We have, also both French and English infidels, who call themselves nullifidians, that is to say, without any religion whatever."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to his vast field of labor Bishop Du Bourg had also kindly consented to take charge of the ancient missions and parishes along the

---

<sup>1</sup> Rosati, "Life of Father De Andreis," pp. 178 and 179.



### BISHOP DU BOURG'S CATHEDRAL

Was located on the corner of Second and Market Streets. Built in 1818 and 1819, Blessed, January 9, 1820. The Church was abandoned in the fall of 1834 and burned down April 7, 1835.



eastern borders of the Mississippi, Cahokia, Kaskaskia, Prairie du Rocher, Prairie du Pont and a number of stations of more recent date, in Illinois. He also offered to the Bishop of Bardstown the services of four of his priests for the missions of Indiana and Michigan, until the latter could make permanent arrangements for the attendance of these districts. Accordingly on the 25th of April we find Fathers Anthony Blanc and Auguste Jeanjean appointed missionaries for Vincennes, and Fathers Louis Bertrand and Auguste Janvier for Detroit. All these distinguished priests were subsequently withdrawn to Lower Louisiana.

The arrangement in regard to the western part of Illinois was made permanent under Bishop Rosati, and subsisted until the erection of the diocese of Chicago. Vincennes remained under Father Blanc's pastorate until February, 1820, during which period two chapels were built by him, one in Davis (now Washington) county, Indiana, the other on the Illinois side of the Wabash River twelve miles from Vincennes.

"Most of the French people at Vincennes came from Canada, where religion is much respected," wrote Father Anthony Blanc, the future archbishop of New Orleans. "These poor French people have gained nothing by the change. Deprived of the consolations of religion, living in the midst of savage natives, they have received nothing in return. Although their language is not a dialect, they have mingled with it so many expressions, strange even to our old French, that one must speak very slowly and very simply to be understood. I found this not a little difficult, but I am becoming accustomed to it."<sup>2</sup> Even the elements seemed to be leagued against the messengers of the Gospel. Father De Andreis complains to Father Sicardi, February 24, 1818:

"The country lying between here and the Pacific is inhabited only by wild beasts, and savages, whose state is not unlike theirs. Though the climate ought to be rather warm, our latitude being only the 39 degree, the cold is so intense, that I never experienced anything like it. We cannot remain very far from the fire, though we often put one coat over another; the cold is so piercing, that it seems to reach the brain, and almost makes one giddy. I have very frequently found nothing but ice in the chalice whilst at the altar, and had some difficulty in melting it by means of fire, which had to be brought to the spot; and even then in consuming the sacred species, I was compelled to make use of my teeth. This extreme cold proceeds from the north winds, which, descending from the icebergs of Greenland, and passing over the frozen lakes of Canada, come here to freeze us to death. We can say, with

---

<sup>2</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. II, p. 343. Englished by Naina dos Santos in "Records of American Catholic Historical Society," vol. XIV, pp. 207 and 208.

St. Paul, 'Blessed be God in frigore,' though not 'in nuditate,' for we are but too well provided for."<sup>3</sup>

Bishop Du Bourg deeply sympathized with his friends whom he had drawn away from cultured surroundings to this inhospitable wilderness. But his imagination painted the future in glowing colors, and his unshaken trust in God and in his friends abroad, supported him and his followers in all hardships and privations. What troubled him most was the pressing need of money.

Finding his means unequal to the establishment of the many buildings needed in his see for religion, divine worship and education, wrote as follows to one of his open-handed friends in Europe: "Say to those who seem fearful of injury to the interests of France by working for distant lands, that the good which they will do here will return to them a hundred-fold. Try to imagine how I must feel, realizing that I am surrounded by an expanse of five or six hundred leagues, upon which is scattered a multitude of neglected Catholics, and Protestants, who are such only by the misfortune of their birth, and who are disposed to listen to the truth when it is preached to them. Turn then your eyes on hundreds of Indian tribes that seem but to wait for instruction in order to embrace the faith. How touched you would be if you could see the frequent deputations which I receive from them, the religious respect which they testify to me, and the urgent prayers which they address to me, to be their father, to visit them and to give them men of God. In the midst of the great sadness which the view of so many of my neglected children causes me, I am beginning to experience the consolation of seeing the seed of the word bear fruit. In the established parishes everywhere they are beginning to approach the sacraments frequently, and in a most edifying manner. A single missionary wrote to me lately that he had had, this year, sixteen hundred Easter Communion and two hundred First Communion. The schism is extinct. Old enemies have returned to obedience and union."<sup>4</sup>

Among the great number of difficult problems that presented themselves to the newly arrived Bishop for immediate solution was first and foremost, the erection of a Cathedral. The old Church, indeed, resembled the first Christian temple, the stable of Bethlehem: but surely, the people of St. Louis would be willing to prepare a more fitting abode for their dear Lord. Bishop Du Bourg was full of gratitude and hope; his vivid imagination, as always, hid away the difficulties of the undertaking in the splendor of the prospective accomplishment.

Under date of January 8th, 1818, that is the second day after his arrival in St. Louis, he writes:

---

<sup>3</sup> "Life of De Andreis," pp. 176 and 177.

<sup>4</sup> *Annales*, vol. I, pp. 20-21, *Records*, vol. XIV, p. 141.

"Here I am in St. Louis, and it is no dream. The dream would be most delightful, but the reality is even more so. I visited several parishes, en route. Everywhere the people came in crowds to meet us, showing me the most sincere affection and respect. My house is not magnificent; but it will be comfortable, when they have made some necessary repairs. I will have a parlor, a sleeping room, a very nice study, beside a dining room, and four rooms for the ecclesiastics, and an immense garden. My cathedral, which looks like a poor stable, is falling in ruins, so that a new church is an absolute necessity. It will be one hundred and fifty feet long by seventy wide; but its construction will take time, especially in a country where everything is just beginning. The country, the most beautiful in the world, is healthy and fertile, and emigrants pour in. But everything is very dear."<sup>5</sup>

It is very difficult, as every priest knows, to start the building of a church immediately after one's arrival in a parish. But Bishop Du Bourg had a number of points in his favor which the ordinary priest usually has not. Chief among them was the absolute necessity of the case. This circumstance, together with the Bishop's imposing presence and eloquent appeal quickly brought the proper decision, so that Father De Andreis, who now had taken up his abode in St. Louis, could write on February 24th, 1818: "The plan of a cathedral to be built of stone, is already traced, and will soon be carried into execution. When this is done, we will begin to think of the other buildings; it is but just that we should commence by the church, for we have nothing now to serve the purpose of one, but a miserable log-cabin, open to every wind, and falling to pieces. The bishop has, however, bestowed upon it a splendid temporary decoration, chiefly composed of the ornaments he obtained while in Europe."<sup>6</sup>

Bishop Du Bourg having decided to make the city of St. Louis his episcopal residence, at least for a time, determined to build a cathedral-church worthy of the diocese he represented. The following notice appeared in the *Missouri Gazette*, March 26, 1818:

"Next Sunday, 29th inst., at 4 p.m., will be laid by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Du Bourg, with the solemn rites used in the Catholic Church on similar occasions, the first stone of the new Cathedral. The intended grandeur of that fabric, together with the sanctity of the object to which it is destined, cannot fail exciting a lively interest in the breasts of all those who have at heart the growth and embellishment of this infant city, but above all, its moral and religious improvement. The stone is to be hollowed in the form of a chest, to contain and preserve to the latest generations the names of benefactors, coins of various descriptions and some memoirs of the present times."

<sup>5</sup> *Annales*, vol. II, p. 338 s. *Records*, vol. XIV, pp. 142 and 143.

<sup>6</sup> "Life of De Andreis," pp. 182 and 183.

Another secret of this rapid settlement of the matter may be found in the negotiations of the Bishop of Bardstown, in the preceding fall, which culminated in starting a subscription; so that when a meeting of the parish was held on the day after the installation, some definite ideas could be discussed; the size and materials of the church were then settled.

“When the first subscription was opened, \$6,566 was subscribed, out of which \$4,271.75 was actually collected—\$3,099.75 by Thomas McGuire and \$1,172 by Jeremiah Connor. It is often repeated that nothing is more dry and uninteresting than an account book. This may be true, if one does not go beyond names and figures; but how false it is when you can read between the lines! I give here a few names, which have become household words among us:

Auguste Chouteau \$400, Pierre Chouteau \$200, A. P. Chouteau \$50, Thomas Brady \$200, Jeremiah Connor \$200, Bernard Pratte \$300, John B. Sarpy \$20, Alexander McNair \$100, B. Berthold \$100, John Mullanphy \$100, Theodore Papin \$20, Theodore Hunt \$100, Frederick Bates \$100, Thomas H. Benton \$100, (added \$50 later), M. Sanguinet \$50, Henry Von Phul \$50 (paid \$30), Francis Robidoux \$60 (paid \$30), Wm. Carr \$100 (paid \$50), P. B. and J. P. B. Gratiot \$30 (paid \$50), Anthony Soulard \$50, J. P. Cabanne \$20, Wm. Clark \$100 (paid \$75), Manuel Lisa \$150.

I notice that by far, most of the three figure subscriptions were faithfully paid; the difference between the amount subscribed and that collected comes mostly from the failure of the small subscribers to keep their pledged word.

A second subscription launched some months later exclusively, it appears, or very nearly so, among the Catholics, netted \$1,303.36, mostly collected by Mr. P. Ledue.

The new church was located on the northeast corner of the churchyard, that is, on the corner of Second and Market, with the entrance on Second. Ground was broken early in 1818, and foundations started at once, so that the corner stone could be laid on Quasimodo Sunday, March 29, 1818; and in June the construction had risen to 15 feet above ground (Letter of Rosati to his brother, summer 1818). Still it was only on Christmas day of the next year that services were held in it for the first time. The blessing took place on January 9, 1820. And high time it was, for the old log-church, which had to be used meanwhile, could hold out no longer. Among the notable events which were enacted in its walls during the last years of its existence, must be mentioned the solemn Te Deum and Thanksgiving service held by Father Savine after the victory of New Orleans, and leaving aside the Bishop's reception, the various ordinations performed by Bishop Du Bourg during his stay in St. Louis. There did Father Niel receive minor Orders, sub-deaconship, deaconship and, on March 19, 1818, Holy priesthood; there Mr.

Portier, the future Bishop of Mobile, was elevated to the priesthood; on Michaelmas day of the same year, 1818; Mr. Tichitoli, on December 15, 1818; Mr. Dahmen, the future pastor of St. Genevieve for many years, on September 5, 1819; there, finally, were held, on December 5, 1818, the funeral services over the body of the lamented Father Carretti, the first of Bishop Du Bourg's recruits, who died in Upper Louisiana.

The new church was not completed when it began to be in use; indeed, it was never finished. Only the middle nave, consisting of a rather awkwardly narrow rectangle measuring 135 by 40 feet, had been erected; the five large arches on either side, originally intended to separate the middle from the side aisles, were filled in with masonry and served as outer walls. But if, from the architectural standpoint the church in its incompleteness gave the idea of a narrow shouldered and narrow chested consumptive body, its beauty within amply compensated the mean outward appearance.

"The cathedral of St. Louis," says the first St. Louis directory, issued in 1821, "can boast of having no rival in the United States for the magnificence, the value and elegance of her sacred vases, ornaments and paintings, and indeed few churches in Europe possess anything superior to it. It is a truly delightful sight to an American of taste to find in one of the remotest towns of the Union a church decorated with the original paintings of Rubens, Raphael, Guido, Paul Veronese, and a number of others by the first modern masters of the Italian, French and Flemish schools. The ancient and precious gold embroideries which the St. Louis cathedral possesses would certainly decorate any museum in the world. All this is due to the liberality of the Catholics of Europe who presented these rich articles to Bishop Du Bourg on his last visit through France, Italy, Sicily and the Netherlands. Among the liberal benefactors could be named many princes and princesses, but we will only insert the names of Louis XVII, the present king of France, and that of Baroness La Candelet de Ghyseghe, a Flemish lady, to whose munificence the cathedral is particularly indebted.

We know that Bishop Du Bourg had come back from Europe with many beautiful and precious things, and have no doubt that, thanks to these, the cathedral must have excited wonderment. But as to there being among these treasures original Rubens, Raphael, Guido Reni and Veronese paintings, we have very serious doubts."<sup>7</sup>

At a meeting of the parishioners held on the 30th of January, 1820, the Marguilliers were authorized to sell the materials of the old church, the proceeds going to the building fund of the new edifice. From an

---

<sup>7</sup> From the beautiful article of the Rev. Dr. Charles Souvay, C. M., "Around the St. Louis Cathedral with Bishop Du Bourg," 1818-1820, read before the "Catholic Historical Society" of St. Louis, Nov. 21, 1917, and subsequently published in the "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. V, pp. 149-159.

entry in the parish account book, page 21, we learn that the sale brought just \$110. Another meeting, convened on March 7, elected six persons "to act jointly with the building committee for the disposal of the pews; they were John B. C. Lucas, Antoine D'Enjen—who resigned and was replaced by Francis Guyol—Francois Xavier Valois, Pierre Didier, Antoine Chenie and Hugh O'Neil; and it was enacted that these six men, together with the building committee, should "take such measure as in their opinion they would think fit for the disposal of the pews of the old church which the aforesaid meeting abandon this day," and "find the most advantageous means of selling the pews of the new church, in order to defray the expenses already incurred in the construction of said church." The account book shows that 95 pews were sold for \$9,295, out of which \$6,786.38 are entered as paid.

But all this, the two subscriptions and the sale of the pews, totaling 12,000 odd dollars, was far from covering the cost of the cathedral—more than \$20,000; nor was the building of this edifice the only undertaking of Bishop Du Bourg: he had started in the summer of 1818 the Seminary at the Barrens; after the wrecking of the old church, he built on the spot the college which had been commenced on November 2, 1819, with Father De Andreis at its head.<sup>8</sup>

The debt still resting on the Cathedral was \$4,500 for which sum Auguste and Pierre Chouteau, and Bernard Pratte, as members of the building-committee had made themselves personally responsible. This sum did not appear exorbitant at the time building operations were begun. Yet, as Billon informs us, "By the time the building was covered in, late in 1819, a revulsion in business had occurred, money had become scarce, the fifty independent banks of Kentucky and other kindred institutions in the West, Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, etc., that had furnished nearly all of our circulating medium, to use an expression of the day, had all "busted up." The building was never finished interiorly, and our commissioners, who had made themselves personally liable, were compelled to apply to the state authorities for relief or pay the bills out of their own pockets.

Accordingly upon the application of the three above-named gentlemen,

"An Act of the Legislature, for the relief of Auguste Chouteau and others, commissioners of the Roman Catholic Church, approved December 17th, 1822, authorized them to sell at public sale, by the Sheriff, so much of the Church Block in St. Louis as was not used for Church and Cemetery purposes, as would be necessary to indemnify them for the amount they had advanced and had become responsible for in the erection of the brick church to the extent of \$4,500."

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 157.

Accordingly, at the request in writing of the said commissioners, Auguste Chouteau, Pierre Chouteau and Bernard Pratte, Sheriff John K. Walker, sold at public sale, September 16, 1823, the south part of the block, being the Walnut street front, as per plat of division, made by the parties interested.

Lot No. 1, 37 by 131 feet, with barn, stable, etc., for	\$ 301
Lot No. 2, 75 by 131 feet, with the orchard	201
Lot No. 3, 70 by 150 feet, with the Presbytere, kitchen and new house	501
Lot No. 4, 48 by 180 feet, with the College	201
Total	\$1,204

Father Niel, the President of the College, was the purchaser, and on May 25, 1824, conveyed to the three above-named parties the same, except the College building, which he reserved with three feet of ground around the same.

Bernard Pratte, Auguste Chouteau and Pierre Chouteau reconveyed to Bishop Joseph Rosati, July 1, 1828, for \$4,748.28, with 6 per cent interest, the foregoing church property.

The old brick church continued to be occupied as such, until the completion of the new stone structure on the Walnut street front of the block, which was opened for divine service in October, 1834. When the old one was abandoned to the lessees of the ground on which it stood it was used as a warehouse for the next six months until it was destroyed by fire, on the night of April 6, 1835.<sup>9</sup>

The erection of the St. Louis College on the site of the old Spanish church, was almost coincident with the building of the Cathedral. The moving spirit in this undertaking was the young curate of the Cathedral, Francis Niel. The beginnings were rather humble, to be extended at a future period, as might be found expedient or necessary.

"With that view", as the *Annalist* of St. Louis tells us, and to aid the undertaking, the following document was drawn up, and received the approval and signature of all the Catholic householders of St. Louis, including a few, who not themselves "Catholics," were allied to Catholic families.

"We, the undersigned, inhabitants and property holders of the town and parish of St. Louis, Territory of Missouri, members of the Roman Catholic religion, being informed that the Reverend Francis Niel, Vicar of this parish, by the authority of the Right Rev. Bishop Guillaume Du

<sup>9</sup> Billon, "*Annals of St. Louis in Territorial Days*," pp. 418-420.

Bourg, has undertaken to erect at his own cost, on a lot forming a part of the yard of the *Presbytere*, a house to be used for lodging the Clergy of our Church, and the keeping of a school for the education of youth; considering the various useful purposes of this enterprise, and desiring to protect it from all claims or molestation on the part of persons badly informed, or badly disposed, as far as necessary, we hereby express our entire approbation of the building of such a house, and inasmuch as in our said capacities we might have a right to dispose of the lot forming part of the *Presbytere*, we warrant the free use thereof for the purpose hereinabove mentioned to the clergy of our communion by the authority of our bishop.

Made and executed at St. Louis, Territory of Missouri, the 30th October, 1819."

Bishop Du Bourg's College, built on the site of the old Catholic log church, on Second, below Market, in 1820: had the following faculty: Rev. Francis Niel, curate of the Cathedral, president; Rev. Leo. Deys, professor of languages; Rev. Andreas Ferrari, professor of ancient languages; Rev. Aristide Anduze, professor of mathematics; Rev. Edmond Saulnier, professor of languages; Mr. Samuel Smith, professor of languages; Mr. Patrick Sullivan, professor of ancient languages; Mr. Francis C. Guyol, professor of writing and drawing; Mr. John Martin, prefect of the studies.<sup>10</sup>

The College was a two-story building of brick and had about sixty to seventy students. Among the pupils we find such names as Wilson Primm, René Paul, French Strother, Jesse Benton, James O'Toole, Lewis M. Clark and the four sons of Governor McNair, with a number of others who later on attained distinction, as Judges, soldiers, statesmen, and merchants. Elihu H. Shepard,<sup>11</sup> who taught languages at the College from 1823 to 1826, in his *Autobiography*, gives a few pleasant glimpses of Father Saulnier and the other Professors of the first College established in St. Louis.

In connection with the College we may mention Bishop Du Bourg's very elegant and valuable library, containing about 8,000 volumes, and which was, "in the language of one of the Bishop's visitors, the most complete scientific and literary repertory of the western country, if not of the western world. Though it is not public, there is no doubt but the man of science, the antiquary and the linguist, will obtain a ready access to it, and find the Bishop a man endowed at once with the elegance and politeness of the courtier, the piety and zeal of the apostle, and the learning of a Father of the Church."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Billon, op. cit., pp. 420 s.

<sup>11</sup> Shepard, Elihu H., "Autobiography," pp. 98-103.

<sup>12</sup> Edwards, "The Great West," pp. 323 and 324.

The lots on which the church, college and other buildings were erected embrace the entire square between Second and Third, and Market and Walnut street, a part of which was still used as a burial ground.

On May 11, 1826 Bishop Du Bourg advised Rosati to close the school because there were no priests available as professors. This was done on the Bishop's last visit to St. Louis.

## FATHER NIEL AND THE CHURCH-WARDENS

Bishop Du Bourg's project of making their little town of two thousand inhabitants, on the frontiers of civilization, an episcopal city with a costly Cathedral and expensive Cathedral clergy, must have seemed visionary to the people of St. Louis, however, strongly it may have appealed to their local pride. The real sentiments of the great majority were reflected in the curt saying of one of their members to Bishop Flaget: "We have a parish Church; we will give our pastor a proper salary; this will be quite enough for our share. But as to the Bishop, we are not obliged to do anything, because his permanent residence belongs alike to all." Nevertheless the pro-cathedral was built, and partly paid: the parish residence was fitted up for the Cathedral clergy. Father Francis Niel who had been raised to the holy priesthood on March 19th, 1818, was appointed assistant to Father De Andreis, the pastor of the Cathedral, and soon followed him as pastor in his own right.

It is of Father Niel's dealings with the Church wardens and parish meetings this chapter would give a few particulars.<sup>1</sup>

At the General Meeting of the Parishioners held on March 7th, 1820, Charles Besson was elected President and Mary Philip Leduc, Secretary of the Building Committee. The wardens for 1821 were Hubert Guion, and Louis Brazeau. On January 21st, of that year the question of the pastor's salary came up. "It was resolved that there should be an allowance to the Curé of the city of a sum of seven hundred piasters annually, which sum shall be taken from the funds of the Church and regulated by the warden. It is understood, however, that this payment must not affect the payment of the debts which the Building Committee has contracted for the Construction of the church."

January 13th, 1822, Joseph Boju was elected warden in place of Hubert Guion, and the following year 1823, there were four wardens: Joseph Boju, Thomas McGuire, J. B. Duchouquette and Michael Murphy: The purpose of this appears from the following resolution: "The wardens shall be obliged to collect the debts due for the pews as well as the rent, which they shall remit to Rev. Francois Niel to pay the expenses of the Church. But, in the meeting held on April 1st, 1824,

---

<sup>1</sup> The subject matter of this chapter was derived mainly from the original "Registrum Ecclesiae St. Ludovici," the MS. of which is preserved in the Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

the wardens were authorized to continue to pay with the income of the church the debt of the church contracted by the Committee."<sup>2</sup>

The question of Father Niel's salary still unsettled, there arose another question of serious import to the Wardens of the Church of St. Louis. In February 1823, the trustees of the town of St. Louis passed an ordinance prohibiting the burial of dead within its limits. The boundary line of the city ran along Seventh Street: The old Cemetery on Market Street between Second and Third must, therefore, be abandoned and a new burying ground must be acquired.

When Laclede - Liguist laid out the village of Pain-Court, soon to be known as St. Louis, he assigned an entire block for the use of the Church. Here the successive churches were erected, here the ministers of God had their home, and here in the church-yard were laid the sacred remains of the dead as seed-grains of the harvest of eternity. The first burying ground in St. Louis was, therefore, a church-yard in the primitive sense of the term. It was in use since 1770. In the first two years forty-four persons were buried in its blessed soil. St. Ange de Bellerive found his last resting place here on December 27th, 1774. From 1776 to 1789 the total number of interments were three hundred and thirty-four, sixty of negroes, and fifty-four of Indian converts. Governor De Leyba received the honor of being buried in the church itself. A list of prominent people laid to rest in the Old Cemetery was published in the Missouri Republican Weekly of September 29th, 1837.

The old was giving way to the new: as the old church had passed away so the old grave yard, also, was doomed.

On March 17th, 1823, a parish meeting was held for the purpose of meeting the emergency. Father Niel is now in the President's chair, and Gabriel Paul holds the position of Secretary. The President announced, that the Cemetery must be closed before the first day of April next year, 1824, and that it was an urgent matter for the parish to procure a suitable plot of ground for a new cemetery. A committee of four was appointed to investigate, whether the parishioners wish to locate their new Cemetery on the common of the city of St. Louis; or to select another location, as convenient as possible.

In the meantime the wardens circulated subscription lists among the parishioners to raise the salary of Father Niel by voluntary offerings.

---

<sup>2</sup> Father Niel, as a student, had come to St. Louis with Bishop Flaget and Father Badin, was ordained by Bishop Du Bourg in St. Louis Cathedral, March 19, 1818, became its pastor and at the same time President of the St. Louis College, was sent to Europe in March 1825, for the purpose of collecting funds for the mission, and never returned. He was an eloquent preacher and published in French a book of devotion. "*La Voie Du Salut*," Par M. Abbé F. Niel, Paris 1845.

On April 13th, 1823, the Committee appointed to make inquiries for a plot of ground for cemetery-purposes made its report to the parish assembled under the presidency of Father Niel; and it was resolved on motion of René Paul, that the wardens be authorized to accept the offer of Mr. Stokes,<sup>3</sup> who proposed to transfer the title to four acres of land on the St. Charles Road, a little more than a mile from the city-limits, without asking any consideration except the assignment of a pew in the Church. The wardens were requested at the same time to report on the advisability of a wood, stone or brick enclosure for the proposed cemetery and to make a complete list of the Members of the Congregation in alphabetical order. The question as to Father Niel's salary was referred to the next meeting.

On September 31st, 1823, a meeting of the wardens was held in the parsonage in which it was unanimously resolved, that there would be reserved all around the new cemetery a border of land, about twenty-one feet in depth, to be distributed in lots for those who might desire a burying ground for their families. The price was set at two piasters a foot of front, Father Niel had added the remark: "Only Catholics were entitled to this privilege," but it was crossed out with heavy strokes of the pen: hence non-catholics were also to be permitted to purchase such lots on the borders of the Catholic Cemetery. The entry is signed by Father Niel and Joseph Boju, C. W. and Thos. McGuire, 2nd C. W.

On June 28th, 1824 the trustees of the Catholic Church gave notice of the opening of their new Cemetery about one mile from the limits of the city, or rather, of the border around the Catholic Cemetery open to non-Catholics as well as Catholics. The announcement read as follows. "The inhabitants of St. Louis and its vicinity are made acquainted that a public graveyard, under the superintendence of the wardens of the Catholic congregation, and adjoining their burial-ground, is now open, and that burials may hereafter take place by conforming with the following resolutions passed by the committee: Applications for burial to be made to the warden in office for the year. The price of burial to be ten dollars, five dollars for children under ten years of age. Persons who would fence in a particular spot for their family, each burial, to be twenty dollars, and ten dollars for children under ten years of age. The amount of burial to be settled with the church warden before the burials take place. No grave to be

---

<sup>3</sup> William Stokes was a member of the Episcopal Church. His career was a really romantic one full of the ups and downs of fortune. John F. Darby in his "Personal Recollections" devotes full twenty pages to "Poor Old Stokes," pp. 126-146. Col. John O'Fallon married a sister of Stokes. It is to Mr. William Stokes the Church of St. Louis owes its second burying-ground.

dug but by the digger appointed for that purpose, and according to the regulations for said graveyard. The warden in office for this year is Mr. J. B. Belcour.”<sup>4</sup>

The question of Father Niel’s salary came up at last in the parish meeting of February 15th, 1824.

In a meeting of the members of the Catholic congregation held this day in church where there were present a majority of parishioners, the wardens made the following report:

“We, the Wardens of the parish of St. Louis, being assembled to take into consideration the situation of affairs of the congregation in general, have first proceeded to the inventory of all the articles of the church committed to our care.

Having taken into consideration the letter which the Reverend Father Niel addressed to the wardens and on which nothing has been stated in the last meetings held for that purpose; being unanimously convinced that it is the duty of every member of the congregation to contribute alike to the support of his Pastor in order to have an equal right to the practice of his religion, and to the spiritual assistance of our holy religion, we have agreed that

1. The annual contribution for the subsistence and maintenance of the Curé of this Parish cannot be less than two piasters for each head of a house and the Catholic proprietors of pews in the church, and of one piaster for the bachelors and young grown people.

2. The payments to begin in the present year will be made known semi-annually the first of March and of September of each year.

3. Every contributor who will refuse to pay (unless his inability to pay is known) will forfeit by this act the rights and privileges attached to the congregation and his name will be taken from the list of the members who compose it.

4. That all the funeral and marriage expenses will always be demandable in advance.

The said four articles read above and intelligible in French and in English have been unanimously approved.”

Then the question of the Cemetery was taken up by the assembly and the resolutions resolved:

“We being also assured that the Bishop of Louisiana has found it advisable and permitted a part of the Catholic cemeteries to be used for funerals other than those of the members of the congregation, have agreed upon the following:

---

<sup>4</sup> Scharf, “History of St. Louis,” pp. 1750 and 1751.

1. The present Cemetery will be enclosed as much as possible in its entirety, and it will include a section of one hundred feet square, to receive there the bodies of persons who do not belong to our congregation, and whose relatives or friends, will request their burial there.

2. The remuneration to be paid for such interments cannot be less than twenty gourdes.

3. Every member of the congregation who will have bought and paid for a family lot as that furnished by the agreement of the third of last September can bury there those of his family who do not belong to our Catholic Congregation by paying to the church the final remuneration by the tariff for interment of the first class.

The said three articles read in French and in English have been unanimously approved.

Resolved further that the list of persons who form the Catholic congregation of the parish of St. Louis will be placed on a special record in alphabetical order with the account of each, open for the payment of the contributions.”<sup>5</sup>

They were great in making resolutions, these early fathers of our diocese: but it required more than resolutions to get on the highway of success. On Sunday, March 28th, 1824, the warden in charge announced to the assembly a letter of Father Niel's offering to re-assign the land of the church which he bought. This refers to the public sale by the Sheriff of so much of the Church Block in St. Louis as was not used for Church and Cemetery purposes, to reimburse the Building-Commissioners, Auguste and Pierre Chouteau, Bernard Pratte and others, for the money advanced by them on the construction of the pro-cathedral. Father Niel, probably at the request of Bishop Du Bourg, had bought the lots for one thousand two hundred and four dollars. He was now offering to turn them over to the gentlemen of the committee as part-payment of the church debt. Only the lot on which the College stood was retained by its President, Father Niel. Yet, the matter of these church lots was a thorn in the flesh of both Bishops Du Bourg and Rosati, for a long time after.

Father Niel now insisted on the payment of a salary of five hundred dollars and four church collections a year. The petition was granted, but the raising of the amount was left to the good will or sense of justice of the parishioners.

Gabriel Paul served as warden in charge during 1825, and Passon Honoré was elected for 1826, but resigned in June 1827, when Louis Auguste Benoist was nominated with Manuel Alvarez as his assistant.

---

<sup>5</sup> Register, *passim*.

In 1828 Market Street was widened. In consequence a part of the old Cemetery was condemned, and all those who had relations in the part which was given up were ordered to leave notice with the Sexton of the Church (the Cathedral) who would remove them without charge. This order is signed by Wm. Carr Lane and R. Paul, Board of Commissioners.

In the meeting of January 3rd, 1830, M. Rodiez was elected Warden for the year. This is the last entry in the Register.

It is written in English, and signed by Father Edmund Saulnier, Father Niel's successor at the Cathedral, Bernard Pratte, M. P. Ledue, Th. Robidoux, E. De Hodiamont and Manuel Alvarez. A number of leaves have been cut out of the book; whether they contained any writing cannot be discovered.

A new project was being slowly realized, the erection of the new stone Cathedral, of Bishop Rosati, in our days designated as the Old Cathedral. In order to obtain means to carry out this for the times magnificent plan, the landed holdings of the Church in St. Louis were reduced to a minimum, just as the place appears today. The last vestiges of the old Cemetery had to disappear. But, whenever a Catholic Cemetery has to be closed, and the land devoted to building purposes, the Church with tender care takes up the remains of her departed and deposits them in consecrated ground. This act of piety was extended in 1831, to practically all the dead resting in the old Cemetery on Market Street.

The circumstances of the event are given by Judge Primm in one of his Sketches of Early St. Louis Catholicity.

"At a meeting of the parishioners on April 4th, 1830, under the presidency of Bishop Rosati, M. Philip Ledue acting as secretary, it was resolved to build a new Cathedral and, in order to raise funds for the undertaking, to lease for 99 years the north half of the Church block where is the ancient Cemetery and the old Church stands." A committee was appointed to carry out these resolutions. A loan of eight thousand dollars was offered by Bishop Du Bourg, and gratefully accepted, and the north half of block 59 was leased to George Morton and Joseph C. Lavelle. This lease was executed on August 25th, 1830.<sup>6</sup>

The contract for digging up the graveyard was given to Benjamin Walker. On March 18th, 1831 the president of the Committee announced, that the digging of the graveyard had been completed

---

<sup>6</sup> From Wilson Primm's "Retrospective View of the First Religious Establishment in the City of St. Louis," read before the Missouri Historical Society, September 16, 1875, and printed in "Church Progress."

according to contract, measured by R. Paul and found to be 46,020 yds: the vault 44 yds., which at  $10\frac{3}{4}$  cts. per yard amounted to \$499.49. He stated moreover, that he had paid Benjamin Walker the whole amount."<sup>7</sup>

The remains dug up by Benjamin Walker in 1831, it would seem, were deposited in a vault in what was afterwards called "The Bishop's Graveyard" on Jefferson Avenue.

---

<sup>7</sup> Primm, l. c.



**VERY REV. FELIX DE ANDREIS**

First Superior of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States  
and Vicar General of Upper Louisiana.



## FATHER FELIX DE ANDREIS

Of all the members of that bright galaxy of missionaries that contributed to the wonderful success of Bishop Du Bourg in evangelizing the diocese of Louisiana, the first one to join was also the foremost one in regard to the gifts of nature and of grace, the gentle son of St. Vincent de Paul, the saintly Father Felix de Andreis. A clear and deep thinker, well fitted to unravel the most knotty questions of divinity and natural science, he was also gifted with a tenacious memory, that treasured up for immediate use whatever he read or heard, and with a heart full of the wisdom that the love of God alone can inspire, he was an ideal Superior; his counsel and advice never failed. But this was not all. Felix de Andreis was a mystic of the school of St. Bernard, St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross, striving after that intimate union with God, which those great mystics enjoyed, and breathing forth, now in prose, now in verse, the delights of the visions God granted to him amid the poverty, the privations and the sufferings of his laborious life.

Only forty-two years of earthly existence were granted to him, but in this short space of time he accomplished many great things. He was a learned theologian, a profound philosopher, and one of the most eloquent preachers of his time. Latin he spoke fluently and with elegance. He was well versed in Greek and Hebrew. Even the natural sciences were of deep interest to his inquiring mind. If he had devoted himself to a literary calling, he would have attained distinguished success, as the elegance of his occasional writings testify. Poetry was his great delight. A volume of sacred songs written by him in moments of mystical abstractions was found among his numerous manuscripts, but subsequently perished. Yet, though highly gifted for a contemplative life, Father de Andreis was called to an active life in the Congregation of the Mission. In the diocese of Louisiana he was to fill the office of Superior of his Congregation and the still more arduous office or Vicar-General for Upper Louisiana, at the same time holding the position of Parish priest of St. Louis and Director of the Seminary of the Diocese and the Novitiate of his Order. Work enough for three or four strong men; And yet, Father de Andreis was never strong physically, least of all after the horrors of the journey from Baltimore to St. Louis. But he did all this work with remarkably rich results. Quiet and unobtrusive in his manner, he went about doing good. If these his charities "that soothe and heal and bless," are not more largely stressed in the accounts of the servant of God, it is because there was something greater, something more lovely and

endearing in him; he was one of the chosen vessels of sanctity who even in their lifetime diffuse all around them the beauty and fragrance of paradise. Felix de Andreis was recognized as a true saint by all who knew him. Deep humility, the broad foundation of all virtues, and sincere and deep love for God and God's children were the Alpha and Omega of his life and all his labors. In his Soliloquy No. 9, he says: "I see very clearly, when I collect my thoughts, that Divine Bounty began to call me to the sweet intercourse of contemplation from my very childhood. I can very distinctly picture to myself the unspeakable delights which I once felt when a child, while listening to one of my aunts, who was singing some hymns on the love of God and the infancy of Mary, as we walked one evening in the gardens of Count Berengar. I did not then foresee what would be the result and, though I was somewhat acquainted with the writings of St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross, I had no precise idea of the treasures hidden in their mystic works."<sup>1</sup>

We have then in Father Felix de Andreis a happy union of the contemplative and the active life, rich in results both for time and eternity. We have in his memory a constant inspiration beautifully symbolized by his luminous star that shone above the place of his happy death in broad daylight, during the funeral services held in the Cathedral of St. Louis. Father De Andreis died on the Feast of St. Theresa; his earthly remains, long since glorified by miraculous occurrences, are the greatest treasure of St. Mary's of the Barrens.

But as history loves to dwell on the deeds and vicissitudes of her heroes, it seems to be time to recall some of the things, either accomplished or attempted in St. Louis by the Vicar General, Superior, Pastor and Saint. On his arrival in the new episcopal See of St. Louis, Father de Andreis took up his abode with the Bishop, in the "episcopal palace," that is, the old stone *presbytere* built in 1778 by Father Bernard de Limpach. Here he established the novitiate of his congregation with three novices. The others were as yet with Father Rosati in St. Thomas Seminary, Kentucky, but were soon to be established in the Seminary at the Barrens.

"I have not enjoyed the consolation of seeing Father Rosati for more than a year," wrote Father De Andreis at this time, "nor have I any prospect of being soon able to do so; for the ties that bind us both to our respective duties are so close, that they will not allow us to absent ourselves under any pretext."<sup>2</sup>

One of his novices died, Father Joseph Caretti, a virtuous and able priest, only twenty-eight years old. "He was a Canon of Porto Maurizio, and his name was Joseph Caretti" writes the Master of Novices. "I attended him in his long illness, which was consumption, and he frequent-

<sup>1</sup> Letter in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>2</sup> "Life of Father De Andreis," by Bishop Rosati, p. 214.

ly mentioned to me his desire of joining our Missionaries. He died on the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, our great protector, at the very moment that I left his bedside to receive into the novitiate his worthy companion a priest named Andrew Ferrari, who was likewise from Porto Maurizio.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, two others were received: Rev. Francis Xavier Dahmen, a deacon, and Rev. Joseph Tichitoli, a subdeacon. Both Ferrari and Tichitoli were about 26 years of age; whilst Dahmen was twenty-nine. They were all excellent subjects, had postulated for more than a year, and after the customary spiritual retreat, were admitted into our novitiate and seminary, on the same memorial day, December 3rd."

But Tichitoli was forced to leave for the milder climate of the south, whilst Father Ferrari was needed at Vincennes, and Father Dahmen at Ste. Genevieve, Father Acquaroni, whom Father de Andreis had called from Kentucky, was sent a few days after his arrival, to take charge of St. Charles, Dardennes and Portage des Sioux. Now Father de Andreis was alone once more, as the Bishop was obliged to absent himself from home a good part of the time, and even Brother Blanka was transferred to the Barrens, where his services were absolutely necessary. Yet the brave and loyal missionary did not repine. Indeed, he deeply felt this isolation and the manifold crosses of his position. "I assure you" he wrote to Father Baccari, "That when I think of Italy, it appears to me an earthly paradise, in comparison with America; and I cannot conceive, how so many Europeans undergo such privations and trials, for a miserable worldly gain. I know that, were it not for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, I would not stay where I am for all the gold in the world."<sup>4</sup>

The love of God and of immortal souls was ever the Christian hero's compelling principle. "You tell me" he writes to his Superior in Rome, "you tell me that I am burdened beyond my strength. Perhaps I am, but this is only because of my weakness. I must however tell you something which redounds to the glory of God, to whom alone it is due: the number of adult baptisms is very great. I have sometimes baptized entire families at a time, during High Mass, explaining one by one, all the baptismal ceremonies to a crowd of people."<sup>5</sup> As Father De Andreis tells us in another place, it was customary to preach on the occasions of Baptisms and marriages as well as of funerals. The 'onus praedicandi,' the office of preaching, was a real onus or burden to Father De Andreis, because it had to be done in either English or French, his native tongue being the liquid Italian.

In one of his letters to Father Sicardi he writes: "besides the discharge of our daily duties, we are obliged to labor not a little to translate

3 "Life of Father De Andreis," by Rosati, p. 215, cf. p. 201.

4 Op. cit., p. 197, cf. p. 163.

5 Op. cit., pp. 200 and 201.

our sermons into French and English . Our greatest difficulty is not in writing, but in speaking and pronouncing the language.”<sup>6</sup>

Among the poignant sorrows afflicting Father De Andreis’ loving heart was the decay of faith and morals he witnessed all around him. Here are some of his experiences: “As to the Catholics, here who are the “*domestici fidei*,” they have the first right to the zeal of the missionary, yet, on account of their ignorance and indolence present to the zeal and vigilance of the evangelical laborer a sight similar to that formerly beheld by the Prophet Ezechiel, a vast plain covered with dry bones, devoid of life. This is a spectacle fit to discourage the most active zeal, for really one knows not where to begin. On account of their constant intercourse with sectarians and infidels of every kind, their ideas of the first and most essential points of Christianity have become distorted ; and unfortunately they show very little inclination to reform them.

“For example, I happened to be in a place, where a rich merchant, who enjoyed the credit of being the principal supporter of Catholicity, treated us with all possible attention and kindness. But one evening I went to visit him, he began, while we were at supper, to assert that one can be saved in any sect, provided only he be an honest man. And he held so tenaciously to his opinion, that it was but with the greatest trouble I convinced him that out of the Catholic Church there is no salvation. Another missionary told me that while he was staying in the house of one of the best Catholics, whose wife was said to be the most excellent Christian in these parts, this fervent lady told him one day that she highly esteemed the custom of assisting at Mass and hearing Sermons, but as to confession, it was, she said, a most abominable practice. We meet with others of the same description, who are not well convinced of the existence of hell, and who are ignorant of the most essential points of religion. It is pretty hard work to remove their prejudices.”<sup>7</sup>

How very familiar these ancient objections to religion must appear to the advanced thinkers of our day, inside and outside of the Church. But the zealous disciple of St. Vincent de Paul, could not be discouraged by the prevalence of these vagaries.

“We can do the most good with the youth of both sexes who really are a consolation to our hearts. They make their first communion with admirable fervor, and afterwards continue to frequent the sacraments and attend catechism. The young girls, especially, delight me by their candor and simplicity ; they are lilies of purity, angels in human form, and their piety will do much good among the rising generation.

“Others are caught on their death-bed, at the latest : we have some of every nation, even Italians, who know how to pay compliments, but

<sup>6</sup> “Life of Father De Andreis,” by Rosati, pp. 184 and 141.

<sup>7</sup> Op. cit., pp. 190 and 191.

who are in reality, perhaps, more estranged from religion than any other people. The Irish are generally very fervent, and show no mercy towards Protestants.”<sup>8</sup>

Whilst in Rome Father De Andreis had witnessed the wonderful effects of the devotion of the *Tre Ore* and introduced it among his people in St. Louis, in Holy Week, 1818, as he writes to his friend Rosati: “We held the best we could the functions of the Holy Week with the help of Father Prior and Father Savine, making great use of the stuff brought from Europe. The Bishop made the design and the Brother with a carpenter built up a sepulchre which, without exaggeration, would not have been out of place in Rome, so magnificent were the draperies, so many the lights and so majestic the appearance of the whole. Two Civic Guards, changing every hour, kept sentry-duty day and night before the Sepulchre; on the evening there was vocal and instrumental music for the Stabat Mater and the Hymn; *Au Sang pui un Dieu va repandre* . . . On Good Friday evening we had the function called the *Tre Ore* carried out in every detail; the setting was magnificent beyond belief.”<sup>9</sup>

There is one more gem to be noticed in the saintly missionary's crown of merit, although it was but a desire never to be realized by him: The idea of a missionary life among the Indians. Even before he set foot upon the land to be hallowed by his labors, whilst preparing himself for his life-work under the roof of St. Thomas Seminary at Bardstown, he gave strong expression to his desires and hopes. Writing to the Vicar General of the Congregation of the Missions at Rome, under date of January 5, 1817, Father De Andreis says: “I feel strongly impelled to devote myself, in a particular manner, to the conversion of the Indian tribes who live beyond the Mississippi. Here (In Kentucky) no trace of them remains, while on the contrary, the Mississippi, which serves as a boundary to the United States, and separates them from the immense wilderness, which extends even to the Pacific Coast, flows by St. Louis, and makes of it the central point of all these savage nations. Among these so far, the light of the Gospel has never penetrated, though they seem well disposed to receive it. Wherefore I intend, when our seminary is well established, to leave Father Rosati at its head, and to wend my way, in *Nomine Domini*, along the banks of the Mississippi and Missouri preaching the gospel to these poor people. Before I leave St. Louis I will have the Catechism translated into their language. This I can do with the assistance of some Indians who come from time to time to St. Louis, and persons of the place who are pretty well acquainted with their language. I have received from men of experience much information, both with regard to the difficulties to be encountered and the manner of

<sup>8</sup> “Life of Father De Andreis,” by Rosati, p. 192.

<sup>9</sup> Letter to Father Rosati, St. Louis, April 2, 1818. A copy of this letter is in the Archives of the Chancery of the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

overcoming them, and, with the help of God, the undertaking seems as easy as if I already witnessed its execution. I shall have much to suffer, but of this I do not think, nor will I allow my mind to rest on it one moment.”<sup>10</sup>

This was not a mere romantic notion, such as many others have entertained since the days of Chateaubriand: a glorious free life with nature and the noble red man of the forest and prairie. No, De Andreis knew better, and his aspirations were immeasurably higher.

“To tell the truth the Indians are uncivilized, ferocious, inconstant and haughty. They habitually lead a very austere life, and sometimes spend several days without taking any nourishment; but then, if they chance to kill a buffalo or a deer in their hunt, they will eat it all at once, almost raw. They wear very little clothes and torment their bodies to please ‘the Great Spirit.’ The old people with the women and children remain in the wigwams, but the others are nearly always away hunting beasts, whose skins they prepare very skillfully, to exchange them with the Americans for provisions and strong liquors. They are exceedingly fond of liquor, so much so, that this propensity constitutes one of the principal obstacles with which the missionary has to contend, in the work of their conversion.”<sup>11</sup>

And a little later: “They acknowledge one only God, whom, in their language, they call Chissemnetu, which means, Father of Life; to him they address their prayers and offer the first fumes of their pipes. To please this god they treat themselves most cruelly. Indeed, their whole religion consists in these practices, some of which are too horrible to relate. They live like the very animals of which they are constantly in pursuit. Their chase provides them with food and scanty clothing (for they go almost naked), and enables them to trade with the white people, who in exchange for furs and venison, give them powder, spirits, paint to decorate their bodies and silver rings for their ears and nostrils. Their aspect is frightful, and one feels almost inclined to doubt if their reasoning powers be fully developed.”<sup>12</sup>

Such a companionship was naturally repulsive to his feelings: but the Indians were children of God, and bore the image of God upon their souls. And they were the poorest of the children of God, and his heart went out to them in love and tenderness.

“These poor creatures” he writes to Father Sicardi, “seem incapable of forming any idea of spiritual and divine things. They know that there is a God, and they begin all their employments by an act of

---

<sup>10</sup> Op. cit., p. 157. It was the common opinion at the time that the “country to the westward of our frontiers, quite to the Mississippi was intended to be a desert for the Indians to hunt in and inhabit.” *Bacroft*, vol. V, p. 64.

<sup>11</sup> Op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>12</sup> Op. cit., pp. 179 and 180.

worship (a fact which should make many Christians blush with shame). When they come to trade with the white people, they begin to smoke, and directing the first cloud on high, they say: 'Anaregare kii chakanda' which means: 'may this ascend to the divinity.' But these notions only concern the present life. They believe that God has given them a religion different from ours, and if they are told of a future life, they, understand nothing about it. With patience and time, however something will be made of them.'<sup>13</sup>

Always hopeful amid a thousand discouragements, and consumed with the zeal for the kingdom of God, Father De Andreis seemed to be on the point of attaining his purpose. In 1820 Bishop Du Bourg was preparing to visit "those immense forests," and Father De Andreis was invited to accompany him.

"Alleluia! Deo Gratias!" he wrote from the Barrens. "At length we are to commence a mission among the savages. I am to have the happiness of accompanying the Bishop to visit these unfortunate people!"<sup>14</sup>

But these wishes were, as Father Rosati wrote, the last sparks of that flame of charity which burned within his heart; for he was soon to depart for heaven, for which he constantly sighed, that he might be united forever with his God. Like St. Vincent, who was not able before his death to behold the establishment of his missionaries in the Island of Madagascar, for which he so ardently longed and had made so many sacrifices; like St. Francis Xavier, who had to stop on the threshold of China without entering the kingdom, because God called him to Himself, so was Father De Andreis to see the Indian tribes, and to approach them, without having it in his power to liberate them from the bands of their ignorance. God destined others after his death, to undertake this work.

---

<sup>13</sup> "Life of Father De Andreis," by Rosati, p. 193.

<sup>14</sup> Op. cit., p. 205.

## ST. MARY'S OF THE BARRENS UNDER FATHER ROSATI

The Ecclesiastical Seminary of Louisiana, St. Mary's of the Barrens, had a remarkably peculiar origin. At the command of Christ's viceroy, Pope Pius VII, it sprang into being in the Eternal city, when Father Charles Dominic Sicardi, Vicar General of the Congregation of the Missions, and Bishop Louis William Du Bourg came to an agreement as to the establishment of a mission in Louisiana under the saintly Father Felix De Andreis. For the eighth article of this instrument reads as follows: "They, (the Priests of the Mission) will earnestly strive to promote and carry out, as soon as possible the erection of a Seminary."<sup>1</sup> The organization of the Seminary was at once completed. Father De Andreis was Rector, Fathers Joseph Rosati and John Baptist Acquaroni, both members of the Congregation, and Father Pereira, a postulant, were the professors; and Leo Deys, a Propaganda student, represented the student body, soon to be augmented by Francis X. Dahmen and Casto Gonzalez. The small but vigorous shoot, was transplanted to Bordeaux, where it was tenderly cared for by the Archbishop of that city, for the space of four months and a half. Here the Seminary grew and prospered. As Father O'Malley tells us: "All, priests and students, devoted themselves to the study of French, which they knew they would need on the Louisiana Mission. While the priests exercised the functions of the ministry according to the Archbishop's dispositions, the three students enrolled for the American Seminary reviewed a part of their philosophy under the direction of Father Rosati. English, too, was added to the program of studies, when Father De Andreis announced the astonishing news of the Bishop's abandonment of the original plan of going to New Orleans as reasons of prudence dictated that he should settle in St. Louis. A fitting conclusion to the Bordeaux seminary regime came with the conferring of Minor Orders on the Feast of the Ascension, May 22. Bishop Du Bourg had reached Bordeaux the day previous accompanied by a young cleric from Como, Mr. Joseph Tichitoli. All were now in high spirits and at once preparations were made for sailing. A contract was finally entered into with the Master of the American brig "*The Ranger*;" and on the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 13, the company, thirteen in all, the priests and clerics "in short dress and round hats," climbed up the rope-ladder aboard the rough sailing vessel. The wind

---

<sup>1</sup> "Life of Father De Andreis," p. 60.

was in their favor, the sails were set, the anchor weighed, and presently they had left Europe for the sake of the Master."<sup>2</sup>

The thirteen that set sail for America were: Five priests: Fathers De Andreis, C. M., Rosati, C. M., Acquaroni, C. M., Caretti and Ferrari; four clerics: Messrs. Deys, Dahmen, Gonzalez and Tichitoli; one brother: Brother Blanka, C. M., and three postulant brothers: Flegifont, Boranvanski and de Latre. On board the *Ranger* the Seminary-life and work continued as at Bordeaux. At the journey's end the growing tree was replanted in American soil, first in St. Mary's at Baltimore, then, after a toilsome journey across the mountains and down the Ohio River, at the Seminary of St. Thomas, near Bardstown, where Bishop Flaget sheltered and fostered it for a year or more, until everything should be prepared for its taking root in the fruitful soil of Missouri.

At St. Thomas the two Seminaries flourished side by side. Father De Andreis taught Moral Theology. During the scholastic year 1817-1818, after Father De Andreis' departure for St. Louis, the lion's share of the ecclesiastical training fell to Father Rosati. The two daily classes of dogmatic and moral theology, the ceremonies, and plain chant, the direction of the students—all were in his hands. "There are," he writes to his brother Nicola in Sora, "among my pupils, representatives of almost every nation of Europe: Italians, Frenchmen, Germans, Dutch, Spaniards and English-speaking Americans. In class we speak Latin, but quite frequently, if they wish to propose any difficulty, they fall into Italian, French or English. For the sake of practice, I answer these difficulties in the language in which they are proposed."<sup>3</sup>

On the 2nd and 3rd of December, 1817, Bishop Du Bourg had brought to land at Annapolis a party of twenty-nine new recruits for his diocese, thirteen of whom were students: Louis Betrand, Auguste Jeanjean and Joseph Valentine (Subdeacons); Hercules Brassac, Desmoulins, Philip Hosten, Francis Niel, David De Pareq, Constantine Maenhaut, Leo De Neckere, Perrodin and Angelus De Geithre (Clerics).

There were six priests in the party, among them Father Anthony Blane, the future Archbishop of New Orleans. The other members were Christian Brothers and others religious. Bishop Flaget, "the most holy, learned, humble and affable man, he ever knew," as Father De Andreis said, was glad to take this little army in his safe-keeping for an indefinite time, and in addition, volunteered to accompany the Bishop of Louisiana to St. Louis. Only Father Stephen Badin, and one of the Seminarians, Francis Niel, accompanied the prelates on their voyage down the Ohio River and up the Mississippi to St. Genevieve, Kaskaskia

---

<sup>2</sup> O'Malley, Rev. Martin J., "The Centenary of the St. Louis Diocesan Seminary," in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Nicola Rosati, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

and St. Louis. They left Bardstown on December 12th, and arrived in St. Louis on January 5th, 1818.

Bishop Du Bourg's first care after the glamour and excitement of his installation had subsided, was to make permanent provision for his Seminary. His mind had been apparently to place it in St. Louis, but Providence had ordered it otherwise. Shortly after his arrival a delegation of Catholics of English descent, from the Barrens, a settlement situated about eighty miles south of the city, and twenty-four miles from Ste. Genevieve, waited upon the Bishop and made known their desire to have the contemplated Seminary located among them. They had been informed about the proposed institution by Father Marie Joseph Dunand, the Trappist Monk from Florissant, who for three or four years had been ministering to their spiritual needs. Father Dunand, they said, had also counselled them to offer the Bishop a tract of land for the new foundation. They had proposed the matter to Bishop Flaget in October, 1817, on his visit to St. Louis as the Bishop's ambassador, and with his encouragement they had acquired a tract of 640 acres, the title to which they would convey to him, as soon as the establishment of the Seminary at the "Barrens" was agreed upon.<sup>4</sup>

On further inquiry, the Bishop found that the "Barrens" was an ideal place for the Seminary, the name itself being, not a designation for a barren and unfruitful piece of land, but rather the equivalent of what the French pioneers were wont to call a "beautiful prairie" amid the surrounding woods. As for the people of the Barrens, Father Dunand and others were full of praise and admiration. The earliest settlers, the Tuckers and Moores and Laytons, had come to Missouri in 1801 and 1802, and a constant stream had followed them from Maryland and Kentucky.<sup>5</sup> The first chapel in Perry County had been built and blessed in 1812 by Vicar General Maxwell, Pastor of St. Genevieve, who also attended the congregation until his death in 1814.

Prior to 1812 Mass had been said occasionally at the home of Old Joseph Tucker. After 1814 the Trappist, Marie Joseph Dunand, had visited Perryville three times a year, from his home at Florissant, as guest of Old Joseph Tucker, who had eight sons and one daughter, all, except the youngest, married and settled about him in good homes.<sup>6</sup>

The April following, Bishop Du Bourg journeyed to the "Barrens" in company with Father Dunand to meet the people, to learn at first hand their condition, to examine personally the nature of the soil, to study the prospects which the future held out. He found the people, honest and industrious: "the best set I ever knew,"<sup>7</sup> the ground easy

---

<sup>4</sup> Dunand's Diary in "Records of the American Catholic Historical Society," vol. XXVII, pp. 49 and 50.

<sup>5</sup> Letter of Isidor Moore in Archives of the St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>6</sup> Dunand's Diary, l. c., p. 45.

<sup>7</sup> Letter to Father Rosati, April 22, 1818, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

of cultivation, the climate healthy. He decided to build his Seminary at the Barrens. Thereupon the following resolutions were drawn up:

1. A tax shall be levied on all Catholics, of the settlement for the purchase of the section of land destined for the new foundation (the purchase price was actually \$9000.00).

2. The people of the parish engage themselves to do personally their share of the work in the construction of the building.

3. A sum of \$7500.00 shall be subscribed by the people of the parish, to be paid in five yearly instalments of \$1500.00 each, for the purpose of aiding in the erection on the premises of a Seminary of learning, contributing to the expense of the church services, and to the maintenance of the missionaries. The total amount once paid, the Catholics of the settlement shall be free from, all further obligation either of assuring a salary to the priests, or of extraordinary contributions. They shall, in return, convey the title of the property to the Bishop. They agree, moreover, to feed, during the first year, the crew of workmen engaged in the construction of the buildings.”<sup>8</sup>

The sum of \$7,500 was certainly a most noble offering, made at a time when money was scarce and many of the colonists were beginners. It seems to have been considered a foundation, the interest on which, was to go to the support of the Church and clergy forever. The work to be done on the house by each parishioner was an extra burden assumed by the people. It is perhaps not the most efficient way to build, yet it was and is the usual one in primitive communities.

Building operations were begun at once. Father Charles Lacroix was appointed architect, to draw up a plan for a house, similar to St. Thomas Seminary at Bardstown, two and a half story high, with a basement containing two halls, and two cellars each 25x17 feet. The building eventually turned out to be “a kind of combination of log-house, frame-house, brick-house and stone-house, having a little of every kind; it was to be plastered and decent inside and outside.”<sup>9</sup> The site chosen was a quarter of a mile south of the old log-church erected in 1814.

The building, at the time, seemed a vast undertaking, “and it was so indeed. But the Bishop, nothing daunted by the manifold difficulties that arose, threw the entire force of his personality into the work, not even disdaining to help the laborers in carrying lumber and remaining the whole day in the heat of the sun. On April 22nd, 1818, the Bishop wrote to Father Rosati, at Bardstown, that the house would be ready to receive his now homeless colony late in next Fall. But this

---

<sup>8</sup> Archives of the Procurator General C. M. Rome—“America,” p. II, quoted by O'Malley in “St. Louis Catholic Historical Review,” vol. I, p. 48.

<sup>9</sup> De Andreis to Rosati, April 20, 1818, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

fond hope could not be realized. The anxious prelate was forced to confess towards the end of July: "Whatever diligence may be made, the house at the Barrens will not be ready this Winter. Still I want to keep my word, and to have all here in October. Accordingly I have rented a house at St. Genevieve for six months, from the first of October, large enough to house almost all of you. Father Pratte and one or two houses of the Barrens will receive the rest."<sup>10</sup>

Now, whilst patiently though eagerly, awaiting the completion of his Seminary Building, the Bishop orders the exodus of the Professors and Seminarians from their temporary home at Bardstown. The letter of instructions for the journey is dated "At the Barrens, July 29th, 1818." Father Rosati and one companion is to make the journey by land over Shawneetown: Two horses of the Bishop had been left at St. Thomas: Old Mr. Joseph Tucker was to be our guide. The main body of the caravan and the baggage were to come to St. Genevieve by flat boat. Some of the party were to remain at St. Genevieve, for a time, among them the three Brothers of the Christian Schools, who were destined for the Academy at St. Genevieve. But as the Bishop sent Father Rosati several supplementary letters of instruction as to the journey, some of which did not reach the leader of the caravan, some misunderstandings arose. Bidding good bye to their friends at St. Thomas, the Seminary of Louisiana entered upon its final remove on the 15th of September 1818. With hearts full of gratitude for the kindness of their old friends of Bardstown but looking forward with glad anticipations of the peace and joy awaiting them in their destined home at the Barrens, the twenty-three priests, Seminarians and Brothers started out on their last journey, "the last of danger and distress," as they fondly hoped. For the rest of the journey and its happy end we will quote the words of Father O'Malley:

"From Louisville, they travelled to the mouth of the Ohio in a flat-boat, not more than eighteen feet long and wide in proportion, which scarcely allowed standing-room for the twenty-three passengers. It leaked so badly as to be repeatedly in danger of sinking; besides, the roof, in a very heavy rain which lasted sometime, proved porous, and for several days they had to bear with the further inconvenience of wet baggage and wet clothes. On landing on the right bank of the Mississippi, which was in the Diocese of Louisiana, a cross was erected, and with gladsome hearts they sang the *Vexilla regis prodeunt*. A forced delay here of ten days, due to the miscarriage of the original plans caused them added suffering. But they were at last in their own ecclesiastical "home," and every obstacle vanished into air, every favor-

---

<sup>10</sup> Du Bourg to Rosati, Kaskaskia, August 2, 1818, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

able circumstance hardened into adamant. The six horses and wagons sent from the Barrens finally reached them, and presently the caravan was plodding its way northward, some on horseback, some on foot. On October the first, they reached the Barrens.

For some unrecorded reason, the plans of the Bishop had been changed. Instead of going to Ste. Genevieve, the Seminarians were conducted to the house (about two miles from the Church) which Mrs. Sarah Hayden, a pious and wealthy widow of the "Barrens," had placed at the disposal of the Bishop until the Seminary should be ready for occupancy. Here were the Seminarians housed: here was the Seminary begun. The Bishop's hopes had been fulfilled, his ambition had been realized, his plans had been accomplished. The tree was planted. The St. Louis Diocesan Seminary, whose leafage and blossoming and fruitage we of a later day have seen, was a reality."<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, there still remained much work to be done ere the Seminary could be accounted complete, "*numeris omnibus absolutum.*"

It was a source of deep regret to Father De Andreis that he could not take part in the erection of the material house; God had appointed him the special work of forming the spiritual edifice, whilst others, and among them his friend and favorite disciple, Father Rosati, were erecting the material one. The Seminarians, also, devoted their time of recreation to the work on the Seminary building. On the 5th of January, 1819, Father Francis Cellini, who had been Canon at the celebrated Hospital de St. Spiritu in Rome, arrived with two companions and was sent to the Barrens to make his novitiate and incidentally to help in the building of the Seminary.

Both Father De Andreis and Father Rosati speak of Father Cellini in the highest terms of praise: "Father Cellini has given the most beautiful proofs of attachment to the Congregation and of the virtues which must be in a missionary," writes Father De Andreis, and again "Father Cellini has to be occupied with many things, that are rather unfavorable to recollection: yet Bishop Du Bourg writes to me, that he is a valuable subject, and Father Rosati is most pleased with him." In his letter of October 1920 Father De Andreis advises his Superior in Rome: "Father Cellini has made his vows to our mutual satisfaction.....He can now speak English sufficiently, and exercises the holy ministry. Moreover he is the only one among us who has any understanding of temporal affairs. Accordingly, I have appointed him Procurator. Father Rosati's opinion of his chief assistant is summed up in a few pregnant words: "Father Cellini is our Procurator, Physician, Mailman, Mason." In regard to Father

---

<sup>11</sup> O'Malley, op. cit., p. 49.

Cellini's knowledge and skill as a physician, the Rector of the Seminary, Rosati, writes, October 18th, 1820: "We have had eight of us sick at the same time. Divine Providence favored us by sending Father Cellini. He is quite a skillful physician. The visit of the nearest doctor would have cost us thirty dollars." It is Father Rosati who gives us the following pen-picture of Cellini's humble and willing spirit:

"On recreation days we usually do not indulge in any other diversion than laboring at some needed work, either in the garden or the fields. Father Cellini is usually the leader. That man knows and can do anything." From his post at the Barrens Father Cellini made regular missionary visits to the ancient, yet sorely neglected parish of New Madrid, at a distance of more than two hundred miles from the Seminary, where he not only kept the faith alive, but also gained a number of converts.<sup>12</sup>

The first fruits of the beautiful tree planted and reared with so much labor and watered by the tears of such holy men, were: Father Francis Niel (March 19th, 1818), Michael Portier, the future Bishop of Mobile (September 29th, 1818), Des Moulins and Hercules Br  ssac (November 1st, 1818), Joseph Tichitoli (December 14th, 1818), Eugene Michaud and Edmund Saulnier (September 22nd, 1822), Martin (October 1822), John M. Odin and John Audizio (May 4th, 1823). On the 5th of September, 1823, Louis Tucker, a native of the Barrens was admitted to the Seminary. Elated with these good results, Father Rosati writes home from the Grand Seminaire, May 24, 1823: "Our seminary is doing very well, every year it furnishes a few priests to the diocese. True, up to the present time we have received students from Europe; nevertheless, we have some belonging to this country also, who give us great hopes. Time was needed to form them. We have at present four priests, sixteen ecclesiastics, twelve secular boarders, and twenty-five day scholars. We have nine brothers of our Congregation of St. Lazarus who work, partly in the fields and partly in the house. Great good might be accomplished, could we send out missionaries among the Protestants and Catholics scattered over a vast extent of territory; but we are hard pressed with all we have to do at home. For besides the Seminary in which we are obliged to conduct a great many classes, we have a very large parish, composed of excellent Catholics who approach the Sacraments frequently and who give us work which is not without fatigue, but which is not without pleasure either."<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Rothensteiner, "Chronicles of an Old Missouri Parish," *passim*, and Holweck, "Ein Blatt aus alter Zeit," in "Pastoral-Blatt," vol. LIX, p. 82 and 131.

<sup>13</sup> Archives of the Procurator General C. M., Rome, *apud* Rosati, "Life of De Andreis," p. 193.

We will conclude this chapter with the noble praise given by Father Rosati to the people of the Barrens. It is more than a patent of nobility to the Catholics of Perry County: "You probably know what a fine population we have in this country. The Catholics number more than one hundred and sixty families. All approach the Sacraments frequently. We are kept busy every Sunday, hearing confessions, and there is always a large number of Communions. There are no balls, no saloons, no luxury. It is a great consolation to see these good people, even those who are employed, practicing their religion without human respect. Judges, representatives, senators are not ashamed to kneel before a priest to beg his blessing. At the doorway of their court house, a cross bears witness that they glory in being Catholics."<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Letter of August 16, 1823, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE LADIES OF THE SACRED HEART

Among the followers and helpers of Bishop Du Bourg in establishing religion on a firm basis in the Mississippi Valley, there were two persons who, even in their life-time, were regarded as true saints. Father Felix De Andreis C.M. and Mother Phillipine Duchesne S. de S.S.C. Both considered themselves as failures; and yet the saintly lives of both are now recognized as the chief inspiration of those unpropitious days of the early dawn. Both were drawn together in holy friendship such as that of St. Francis de Sales and St. Frances de Chantal, and both are now proposed to holy Church for the honors of Beatification.

Of Felix de Andreis we have written a chapter, all too meager, indeed, compared with his greatness and nobility. Of Mother Phillipine Du Chesne we must now give a brief account.

Four years after the foundation of the Society of the Sacred Heart by Madeleine Louise Sophie Barat, now a canonized Saint, Rose Phillipine Du Chesne, who had been a novice at the Visitation Convent of Saint Marie D'en Haut, but whom the terrors of the revolution had prevented from making the solemn vows, applied to Madam Barat for admission to the new Society, and offered her the rather dilapidated convent which her family had secured for her.

Mother Barat gladly accepted the offer, and leaving the house at Amiens in the care of Madame Bandemont, set out with two companions to found the new house of her Society at Grenoble. Here in the weather-worn convent of Saint Marie-d'en-Haut she found Madam Duchesne, her ever dear Phillipine, with an assembly of other religious belonging to several Orders, and assumed the direction of the community. Following the rule "Firmness sometimes, harshness never, charity and gentleness everywhere and always," Mother Barat's gentleness conquered all hearts and bound them together in the love of the Sacred Heart. In due time Mother Duchesne made her solemn vows, served at various places and was finally elected Secretary General to Mother Barat,<sup>1</sup> But the aspirations of the gentle Phillipine were for a very different manner of life. From her earliest years her desire had been to carry the gospel

---

<sup>1</sup> On the early days of Mother Du Chesne, Cf. the Life written by L. P. J. Baunard, translated by Lady Fullerton, and the recent publication by Marjory Erskine, 1926. "Baunard's Life of Mother Barat," chapters VI, VII, XVI and XXIX, contain the story.

to the poor Indians across the sea. For this she had prayed and this she asked as the greatest favor from Mother Barat. Now the position as Secretary General seemed to preclude all hope of her ever attaining her heart's desire. But Providence found a way when all hope seemed to be at an end. On the 14th of January 1817, Mgr. Du Bourg, Bishop of Louisiana, called on Mother Barat at the Convent in Paris, and asked for a colony of Sisters for his wild-west diocese. Mother Duchesne heard of it, and at once began to importune her Superior to send her to the missions. Mother Barat reluctantly consented. For Bishop Du Bourg would not take a refusal, and of all her sisters, Madame Duchesne seemed best fitted for the onerous task. Matters were now quickly arranged with the Bishop, and it was agreed that the following spring Mother Duchesne and her companions should start for Louisiana.

Two choir-sisters, Octavie Berthold and Eugenie Audé, and two lay-sisters, Catherine Lamarre and Marguerite Manteau, were chosen from a crowd of applicants to accompany Mother Duchesne. On the 21st of March 1818, Holy Saturday, they left the shores of France in a small sailing-vessel, the *Rebecca*. Father Martial, one of the Louisiana Priests, accompanied them. On the 25th of May, the stout little ship entered the muddy waters of the Mississippi, and on Friday the 29th, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, landed its passengers in New Orleans. The way-worn pilgrims were hospitably entertained at the Ursuline Convent. After a long delay caused by the lack of instructions from the Bishop, they set out for St. Louis, Mgr. Du Bourg's episcopal city, and arrived there on August the 22nd. Here they were informed that their real destination was the town of St. Ferdinand de Florissant on the Missouri River, where a tract of land was bought for their use. But as their convent there was not built as yet, and as the Bishop was then fully occupied with his Cathedral and Seminary, they were to take up their abode in the city of St. Charles, in a house belonging to Mrs. Duquet.<sup>2</sup> Their Father Confessor, Benedict Richard, was to have his residence in the same house, and also to take charge of the Parish of St. Charles. Father Benedict Richard had accompanied the nuns from La Fourche in Louisiana to St. Louis. At Kaskaskia the chief of the Illinois and his daughters came with other Indian braves to welcome him and his companions. "They were on horseback, and dressed in beaded garments and so presented an imposing and interesting spectacle," wrote Mother Duchesne.<sup>3</sup> Father Richard was not, it seems, entirely suited to fill the office of the Spiritual Director of a newly-founded Community of Sisters. A man of more cheerful disposition like Father Martial would have been preferable. The kindly and humble Madame Duchesne

2 The house was at one time the residence of the Spanish Commandant of St. Charles.

3 Erskine, op. cit., p. 154, 156, and 166.

seems to imply this in her little pen-picture of Father Richard: "Mr. Richard," she wrote "like his name-sake, the apostle of Michigan, is a true priest, according to the heart of God. His large and emaciated frame, his meditative and austere face, lend him the appearance of an anchoret, rendering him better calculated to inspire respect than to elicit affection. For all that, he is none the less an excellent man, and a full noble character who hides beneath his extreme reserve of words and manner a devoted heart."<sup>4</sup>

The sisters felt disappointed in the place assigned to them; and the priest could do but little to dispel the gloom. They had hoped to found a school for girls in the episcopal city, where they might enjoy the opportunities for spiritual aid and counsel, as well as of a larger sphere of helpfulness to the children. Yet, in the spirit of humble submission, they opened an educational institution in St. Charles, the boarding school numbering but three pupils; the day school doing fairly well.

One precious consolation came to the much harassed Superior in the form of the hearty approval of her undertaking by the reigning Pontiff, Pius VII: Cardinal Fontana's letter read: "His Holiness has been delighted to see how these courageous nuns, abandoning everything to follow Christ, and rising above the weakness of their sex, have not been afraid of crossing the wide ocean in order to transport their pious Institute into savage countries, and thus to devote themselves to the greater glory of God, the honor of the Church, and the salvation of souls. His Holiness wishes them the most prosperous success, and gives, in the most affectionate terms, his apostolic benediction, not only to those already in America, but also to all who are preparing to join them."<sup>5</sup> Such words of praise and encouragement were indeed, a God-send, falling like heavenly dew on parched land.

Among the difficulties encountered by the sisters during their stay at St. Charles, the historian of Florissant recounts the following: "Scarcity of wholesome food, of firewood and of hired labor for the rougher household tasks, the disorderly and dissolute ways of a frontier town, the prairie-fires which stole up to the very edge of the settlement, alarming the timid nuns, and above all, the utter lack of prospect that the school would ever develop to such an extent as to make it a means of support for the community."<sup>6</sup>

Mother Barat also was dissatisfied with the choice of St. Charles as the home of the Sisters. "How much I regret, my dear daughters, that

<sup>4</sup> "History of Florissant," Conway, 35. Cf. Erskine, p. 190.

<sup>5</sup> "Life of the Venerable Madeleine Louise Sophia Barat," Roehampton, 1900, p. 199.

<sup>6</sup> Father Gilbert J. Garraghan, in his beautiful history of "Saint Ferdinand de Florissant," p. 127.

Monseigneur has established you in a place so little suited for your works. In a village and so far from the families who would be inclined to send their daughters to your school, it can never get on.'"<sup>7</sup> The Bishop himself became convinced of the necessity of a change of location when he heard Mother Duchesne, the ever-patient soul, complain: "We merely vegetate in this place and forego the good we might do elsewhere." This circumstance, and the fact that the lease of the house was about to expire seemed to call for a removal. Florissant was suggested by the Bishop. In company with Monseigneur and Father De Neckere, Mother Duchesne and Madam Berthold visited the place and accepted the offer of the site. Arrangements were made with Father Dunand, the Pastor of Florissant, for the erection of a brick-building<sup>8</sup> for the nuns. As a temporary home the Bishop assigned the nuns his farm near Florissant, where on a little knoll near the river, there stood a few log cabins of the most primitive kind. The community was to occupy these cells, whilst Father Charles De La Croix, supervisor of the "Bishop's Farm," chose the corn-crib for his temporary shelter.

September 5th was set for the migration of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, with their pupils and their belongings, from St. Charles to the Bishop's Farm. Like the landing of the Trappists, ten years before, the landing of the Nuns was effected at the Charbonnier, a hill on the right bank of the Missouri, near St. Ferdinand. Mother Duchesne has recorded in her Journal some of the picturesque incidents of this migration, illuminating what was unpleasant and sordid with the quiet golden gleams of Humor; "Sister Octavie and two of our pupils next embarked. I was to close the march in the evening with Sister Marguerite, the cows and the hens. But the cows were so indignant at being tied, and the heat was so great, that we were obliged to put off our departure to the cool hours of the Morning. Then by dint of cabbages, which we had taken for them in the cart, they were induced to proceed. I divided my attention between the reliquaries and the hens. We crossed the Missouri opposite Florissant. On landing Marguerite and I drew up our charges in line, she the cows, and I the hens, and fed them with motherly solicitude. The Abbé de La Croix came on horseback to meet us. He led the way galloping after our cows, when in their joy at being untied they darted into the woods."<sup>9</sup> Father De La Croix, the manager of the Bishop's Farm had vacated his cabin in favor of the Sisters, so that room could be made for about ten to fifteen persons. An addition of rough boards was made to Father De La Croix's corn-crib

---

<sup>7</sup> Garraghan, *op. cit.*, p. 127. Baunard, p. 190.

<sup>8</sup> Father Dunand finished the Sisters' Convent before he set out for Prairie du Chien, about 1920.

<sup>9</sup> Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

residence, and a small chapel was also hastily constructed. Father De La Croix now served as the Sisters' chaplain and confessor: during his missionary trips to the Indians on the Gasconade and the Osage Rivers the saintly Father De Andreis supplied his place: In December 1819, the latter conducted a spiritual retreat for the nuns and their pupils.

Whilst the gentle ladies were busy with their school and the manifold duties of farm-life, their building in the nearby town of St. Ferdinand was making steady progress. At last the "Holy Land," as Father Dunand called the new establishment, was ready to receive the community. It was toward the end of December that the transfer was made, in bitter cold and driving snow. But on Christmas eve all the members of the institution, sisters and pupils, were reunited in their Convent at the village, and assisted at the mid-night Mass, Father De La Croix celebrated for them. All were full of gratitude and holy joy.

But the climate of early Missouri, so changeable and severe in heat and cold proved a sore trial to the ladies accustomed to the mild and equable climate of France. In 1820 all the sisters became seriously ill, but the boarding-school they had established grew apace, numbering in May 1820, twenty-one students. A Novitiate of the Order was established and soon brought most happy results. It was urged by some, Bishop Du Bourg among them, that American girls could not be won for the religious life as practiced by the Ladies of the Sacred Heart: Mother Barat and Mother Duchesne were of the contrary opinion and refused to accept any change. Bishop Du Bourg then approved the Rule for his entire diocese. In their effort to gain recruits in America, the sisters were assisted by Father Dunand. On December 22, 1820, Mary Layton, a Native Missourian from Father Dunand's favorite parish at the Barrens, received the habit of a lay-sister. It was the first Sisters' reception in Upper Louisiana since the beginning of the world. Other devout and earnest souls soon followed: Emilie Saint Cyr and Mary Anne Summer then Eulalie Hamilton and Matilda Hamilton of Kaskaskia, Illinois. "They are more pious than we are when they are Catholics, and more constant in their resolutions,"<sup>10</sup> wrote Mother Duchesne in the joy of her heart at seeing a beautiful future assured to her Society.

Another precious consolation came to the much harassed superior of the struggling community in the form of generous gifts from her old-world friends in Paris and Grenoble. Her brother wished to send her money in order to bring her back to France. "Tell him," she wrote back, "that I beg him to give that sum for the travelling expenses of two more nuns for Louisiana."<sup>11</sup> No regrets, no misgivings, amid all the destitution and endless labor; "We are very happy in our brick-built

---

<sup>10</sup> Bannard, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

<sup>11</sup> Erskine, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

house," wrote Madame Berthold. "In Madame Duchesne we have an example of every virtue." And in the love of the Sacred Heart all found their comfort and joy.

It had been one of the pious dreams of Mother Duchesne to erect a monument to the Sacred Heart in the form of a public oratory. Bishop Du Bourg helped to realize her desire by dedicating the new Church of Florissant to the Sacred Heart under the invocation of St. Ferdinand and St. Francis Regis. On the 19th of February 1821, the cornerstone was laid by Father De La Croix.<sup>12</sup> In the same year three more missionary sisters arrived from Paris. The Institute thus enlarged and strengthened was now ready to send out new shoots into other parts of the diocese. The first colony of the Nuns of the Sacred Heart was established at Opelousas, in Lower Louisiana, about 900 miles south of St. Louis, where a Mrs. Mary Smith, a wealthy convert, had offered to Bishop Du Bourg a tract of land on her estate at Grand Coteau and a Convent school to be built and provided at her expense, for the purpose of educating girls and young ladies. The outlay also for bringing the sisters there was to be borne by the foundress. Bishop Du Bourg was pleased with the offer and at once communicated its tenor to Mother Duchesne, who was delighted with the prospect that opened before her. "A hundred years might elapse before we received such another offer in a country like this,"<sup>13</sup> she wrote to Mother Barat. As Mother Barat approved the plan, Mother Duchesne proposed Madam Eugenie Audé as the superior of the new establishment. "God made her to be a superior," she wrote, "There is no one in the Community who has an equal power of attracting both mothers and children."<sup>14</sup> Mother Eugenie, accompanied by Sister Mary Layton, embarked on the Steamer *Rapid* for the South, on August 5th. At Plaquemine the steamer grounded. All passengers were landed, the Sisters had to continue their journey in a cart, and then on horse-back. At last, on the 25th of August, they arrived at the house of their benefactress, Mrs. Mary Smith. They were anxious to resume the regular order of religious life in their own house, which, however, was not ready for occupation. The Parish Priest of St. Landry was Father Hercules Brassac.<sup>15</sup>

It could not be expected that no trials would attend the first days of this new establishment. Sister Mary became ill, and the superior had to take over her duties. She herself began to suffer; a malignant fever

<sup>12</sup> Erskine, op. cit., p. 226.

<sup>13</sup> Baunard, op. cit., p. 220.

<sup>14</sup> Baunard, op. cit., p. 220.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Messmer, S., Archbishop, Hercules Brassac, in "Cath. Hist. Review," vol. III. pp. 392 ss.

brought her to death's door. Her faith in the power of the Sacred Heart restored her. Mrs. Smith expected to live in the community, without becoming a member; which Madam Audé could not permit. The unpleasantness caused by this misunderstanding was soon overcome by the prudence and gentleness of Mother Audé. In the meantime the sisters sent from France had arrived at Florissant. They were but two: Madame Matheson and Madame Murphy. Madame Murphy, an Irish lady of a generous, amiable and candid disposition, was destined for Grand Coteau, whilst Madame Lucille Matheson remained at Florissant. Grand Coteau soon supplied its share of recruits to the little band of missionaries. Two novices, Madame Gerard and Madame Carmelita Landry, received the habit in 1822. Bishop Du Bourg, who had been at Opelousas, requested that two Sisters from the novitiate at Florissant, Josephine Saint Cyr and Mary Mullanphy, should be sent to Grand Coteau. Mother Duchesne accompanied them to their destination. On the return voyage, the dread scourge of the south, Yellow Fever, attacked the travellers on board the *Hecla*. Madame Duchesne here became a true Sister of Charity to the afflicted, until her strength was gone. She and her companion were landed on the shore near Natchez and, being denied admittance to the city, at last found a refuge with a good Catholic family across the river. Only after months she found herself strong enough to continue her journey homewards on the steamer *Cincinnati*. She arrived at St. Louis on the 28th of November 1822.

The Society of the Sacred Heart was now firmly established on American soil; after many dangers encountered, sorrows and privations borne, and contradictions endured, the little tree, planted by the waters of tribulation, was beginning to stretch forth its branches over all the land. But the fervent though now silent wish of Mother Duchesne, the work of converting the Indians, seemed as far from fulfilment as when she uttered it first to Madam Barat. The romantic glamour of the plan had, indeed, vanished now: "Formerly we entertained the pleasing thought of instructing docile and innocent savages, but the women as well as the men are idle and addicted to drinking. Moreover we have half-castes who unite all the moral miseries of the two races."<sup>16</sup>

Yet in spite of this saddening knowledge, she still held sacred the ideal of her youth. Not now, not for a long time to come, will she be permitted by Providence to gratify her yearning for the labors and perils of the missionary life among the children of the forest and prairie. There is work to be done, there are prayers and sacrifices to be offered

---

<sup>16</sup> Baunard, op. cit., p. 183.

up, there are tears to be shed for the immigrant from the Eastern states and from all the countries of Europe, the material for the rising walls of the Church in the Valley of the Mississippi. The care for the Indians was reserved as the reward of her life-work, the crown of all her labors. And the means of accomplishing it were the Jesuit Fathers, who came from far-off Maryland to establish their home on the Bishop's Farm in the immediate neighborhood of her convent in Florissant.

FATHER CHARLES NERINCKX AND HIS RELATIONS  
WITH ST. LOUIS

The Reverend Charles Nerinckx is one of the most admirable characters in the early annals of the Western Church. His works and words have been recorded by some of our most distinguished writers, Archbishop Martin Spalding of Baltimore, Bishop Maes of Covington, Father De Smet, the great apostle of the Indians, Rev. W. J. Howlett and others of note. Being next to Father Stephen Theodore Badin, the earliest priest to foster and spread the faith in the wilderness of Kentucky, and furthermore being the founder of the illustrious Society of the Loretines, properly styled "The Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross," Father Charles Nerinckx deserves a memorable page in our record of the Church's early struggles and triumphs in Kentucky. A place of honor is due to him also in the history of the Diocese of St. Louis. It was through his instrumentality, that the Loretine Sisterhood was planted in the state of Missouri; and that, what is perhaps the grandest of all our religious institutions, the Society of Jesus, was brought to the West. Father Nerinckx's part in these two far reaching events deserves more than a passing notice in our History.

Charles Nerinckx was born on October 2nd, 1761, in the village of Herffelingen in Brabant. He was the oldest of a family of seven brothers and seven sisters, the majority of whom had the happiness of becoming priests or religious. After a regular college course, the youthful Charles entered the Seminary at Mechlin to prepare himself for the priesthood and was there ordained on November 4, 1785.

During his stay of eight years at Mechlin, the zealous priest had every opportunity of studying the undercurrents of life among the rich and the poor, the pride and covetousness of the one, the human frailty and contempt of authority of the other class. What wonder then, that Father Nerinckx, like so many other priests of the revolutionary time, became a stern and uncompromising advocate of justice and right, to such a degree, as to incur the charge of Jansenism.<sup>1</sup>

The invasion of the Netherlands by the French revolutionary armies under Dumourier and Pichegru in 1793, changed the entire course of Father Nerinckx's life. Being condemned to death by the revolutionary

---

<sup>1</sup> Not the heresy of Jansenism, but a certain rigorism which savored of the spirit of Jansenism. The quarrel of Fathers Nerinckx and Badin with the Dominicans is exhaustively treated by Father O'Daniel in the "Catholic Historical Review," vol. VI, pp. 15-45.

tribunal, he was obliged to hide and eventually to turn his eyes toward the struggling Church of America. "On the 2nd day of July 1804," he writes, "having left my parents and friends in ignorance of my departure, I started from the Hospital of Dendermonde, where I have remained concealed from the world."<sup>2</sup> His destination was America. He arrived at Baltimore on the 14th day of November, 1804, and on the Feast of Pentecost, June 2nd, 1805, he left Georgetown for Baltimore, and thence travelled with a company of Trappists<sup>3</sup> to his appointed missionary field. On the 2nd day of July, 1805, he arrived at St. Stephens, the home of Father Badin, who, at that time, was the only priest in all the wide territory of Kentucky.

In 1808, Pope Pius VII wished to appoint Father Nerinckx Administrator Apostolic of Louisiana, Upper and Lower, and the good Father would undoubtedly have become bishop of that vast diocese, including St. Louis as well as New Orleans, if his humility and distrust of himself had not prevented the promotion.<sup>4</sup> What Father Nerinckx desired was an appointment as missionary in Upper Louisiana, where the Church seemed poorer and more in need of priests, than it was in Kentucky, and where he hoped to realize his life-long dream, the conversion of the Indians. Bishop Carroll of Baltimore at that time held jurisdiction over all Louisiana, and so could have given Father Nerinckx the desired faculties and instructions for the missions near St. Louis, of which he writes in his petition in 1809.

1. There are two villages, St. Louis and St. Charles, about twenty miles from each other, which have a population of about 200 families, and are fifty miles from the nearest priest.

2. There is a congregation called Tucker's Settlement of about 60 families, seventy miles away from the former place. (St. Louis), and another called Fenwick, twenty families and thirty miles away from Tucker's.

3. Many heathen Indians live in the vicinity, and it is asserted, that my labors among them would not be without fruits.

4. This extensive field is never visited by a priest.

5. There are but two priests in the entire region. One is Rev. Mr. Olivier, a very pious man, but old and totally ignorant of English. The other priest, Rev. Mr. Maxwell is sufficiently known. He resides seventy miles from Tucker's Settlement.'<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Maes, 1. cit., p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> The Trappists of Abbot Guilet and Joseph Marie Dunand.

<sup>4</sup> Letter of Bishop Carroll, September 5, 1809, Maes, "Life of Nerinckx," p. 195.

<sup>5</sup> Father Maxwell of Ste. Genevieve. The Petition can be found in Maes, Camillus, "Life of Charles Nerinckx," p. 202.

This request of Father Nerinckx seemed just and proper: yet it was not granted, as Bishop Carroll did not wish to embarrass the newly appointed Bishop of Bardstown, Benedict Joseph Flaget. Under this saintly Prelate the untiring missionary was yet to reap his most abundant harvests in the old field of Kentucky. By Bishop Flaget's order he took charge of the Parish of Hardin's Creek, with a missionary field extending from Washington County to Union County and embracing about half the State of Kentucky. What his piety and zeal accomplished here for the glory of God and the upbuilding of a staunch Catholicity, is extraneous to our subject. Only two great and loyal deeds, that have a bearing on the history of St. Louis Diocese, shall occupy our attention in this chapter.

As Father Nerinckx was not permitted to serve in the ranks of the consecrated hosts that were to establish the diocese of St. Louis, he welcomed the opportunity of sending others in his place. The Society of Jesus which, in spite of the decree of dissolution, had been permitted to continue its canonical existence in Russia and Prussia, was re-established everywhere by affiliation with the Russian Province. In 1803, Bishop Carroll of Baltimore took the first steps in the matter, and in May 1805, the former Jesuit Fathers of Maryland reassumed corporate existence. They at once established Georgetown College, and a Novitiate of the Order, which in 1819 was removed to Whitemarsh, Maryland.

Father Nerinckx, eleven years after his arrival in Kentucky, made a visit to his old home in Belgium, then a part of the Netherland Kingdom. He there published a pamphlet in Flemish on the American Missions, which had a wonderful effect on the youthful ecclesiastics of Brabant. Nine young men volunteered to go with the American missionary to the wilds of America, three of them were, in the course of time to find their way to St. Louis; John Oliver Van de Velde, Peter Joseph Timmermans and Peter de Meyer. All of them with one exception, however, were won by Father Nerinckx for the Society of Jesus. On May 16th, 1817, the company embarked at the Island of Texel, on the brig *Mars*. They had an eventful and perilous voyage. Pirates boarded the ship but would not do harm to any one, as they saw how poor the passengers were, a storm of the most violent kind assailed them and threatened shipwreck, but owing to the ceaseless labor of all, passengers and crew, no harm was done; lack of food and water reduced the voyagers to the last extremities, but favorable winds at last sped them on to their destination, Baltimore and the Jesuit home at Georgetown.

In 1820, Father Nerinckx made a second trip to Belgium with even greater results, both for the Society of Jesus and the Diocese of St. Louis. On his return in 1821, he had in his party most of the young men, who two years later, were to emigrate from Maryland to the West under

the leadership of Father Charles Felix Quickenborne and there lay the foundations of the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus.

On his way to Europe Father Nerinckx paid a brief visit to the Jesuits at Georgetown, Maryland, and there met Father Van de Velde, one of the companions of his former journey, who handed him a letter intended for a friend and former pupil, Jodocus Francis Van Assche, then a student in the Seminary of Mechlin. Young Van Assche would have gladly gone with Van de Velde, if too great youth and lack of means had not prevented him. But his desire of joining the Jesuits in America still persisted. Father Nerinckx delivered the letter at Van Assche's home, and the father of the young man took it to his son in Mechlin. The heart of Jodocus took fire at once. For a time he could not get into communication with Father Nerinckx, who was obliged to conduct his affairs in utmost secrecy, as the government was unfriendly to all Catholic endeavors, and would surely have arrested the missionary from America on one plea or another. In his search for Father Nerinckx, Van Assche was accompanied by John Baptist Elet, a student of the Grand Seminary at Mechlin. At last they found Father Nerinckx, who told them, when and from what part he would start again for America. On the reopening of school, Elet communicated his and Van Assche's plan of going to America to John Baptist Smedts, a college friend, and won him over to the pious and romantic project. A layman of Tournhout, Pierre de Nef, gave the young men a large contribution for the voyage and letters of introduction to a number of well-disposed people of his acquaintance. Now Peter Verhaegen, a Professor at the Petit Seminaire at Mechlin, Felix Levinus Verreidt of Diest, Francis De Maillet of Brussels, Van Horzig of Hoogestraten, all students of the Grand Seminaire; and a little later, Peter De Smet of Termonde, were made partners in the enterprise. A certain merchant of Mechlin named Ketelaer, the confidential agent of Father Nerinckx, kept the company informed regarding the vessel in which Father Nerinckx intended to sail. In his house they stored their baggage and deposited their funds. At last the news came that their guide and protector would sail from Amsterdam in August. Thereupon they started for that city, but hid their identity as much as possible for fear of being detained for evading military service. They then crossed the Zuider-Zee for Texel, the place of embarkation, where M. Ketelaer had made arrangements for their stay. Meanwhile Father Nerinckx himself had arrived, incognito, upon the island, accompanied by Charles Gilbert of London, and James Van Rysselberghe, both of whom wished to become lay-brothers. Father Nerinckx had some trouble in dampening the effervescent zeal of the young men, that threatened to bring ruin to the enterprise.

At last their long expected ship, the *Columbia*, was announced. They hastened to take their seats on the pilot-boat and boarded the vessel. Father Nerinckx appeared among them a little later.

It was on Assumption Day, August 15th, 1821, that the voyage started, and Sunday, September 23rd, that it came to a close at Philadelphia. On Monday they resumed their journey for Baltimore, where two of the party were prevailed upon to stay: the remaining seven, Van Assche, Elet, De Smet, Verreidt, Verhaegen, Smeedts and De Maillet, hastened on to Georgetown College, to be admitted into the Society of Jesus by Father Anthony Kohlman. On October 6th, 1821, they began the period of their probation, under their fellow countryman, Father Charles E. Van Quickenborne, who had come to America a few years before. Father Nerinckx, having magnificently fulfilled his promise to Father Kohlman, to bring him fresh accessions from Belgium, now retraced his steps to his old missionary field in Kentucky. As to the ultimate destiny of his Jesuit proteges the following chapter of our History will give all necessary information.

During the period that elapsed between his first and second recruiting expedition across the sea, Father Nerinckx met the great opportunity of his life, to found a religious Sisterhood, that was to furnish, under God's Providence, many of our most successful educational institutions, the Sisters of Loretto. In the year 1812 Miss Mary Rhodes, a native of Maryland, asked permission of the Pastor of St. Charles to open a school for girls. Her request was readily granted. Soon two other young ladies offered their services as teachers. We will let Father Nerinckx finish the story: "The sight of three young women joined in the same work revived the old idea of a convent, and it was thoroughly talked over. The project was laid before Rt. Rev. Benedict Joseph Flaget, and he willingly consented to the plan. Miss Nancy Rhodes, Mary's sister, who was afterwards the first Superior, bought the small tract of land on which Loretto is built, for 75 dollars, and gave her negro, who was sold for \$450.00. A subscription of some hundred dollars was made up, and the congregation was called upon to assist in building a more convenient house. In the beginning of July 1812, the first log was cut for the new convent. Great difficulties, hardships and labors were met at every step. The nuns increased, the houses grew in number, the schools continued, yet they had nothing to depend upon but the sole providence of God and the gracious protection of the Blessed Sorrowful Mother Mary."<sup>6</sup>

The Society was at first governed according to the Rule devised by Father Nerinckx and approved by Bishop Flaget. But Rome considered

---

<sup>6</sup> Father Nerinckx Journal in "Howlett," p. 246.

some portions of it too rigid and made some changes, which were of course, readily accepted by Father Nerinckx and his sisterhood. This rule, corrected and approved by Rome, still seemed rather severe to many, but, as Father Nerinckx repeatedly stated, the sisters loved its austerities, and were happy under its severity. In fact, they regretted the mitigations made by Rome, whilst they loyally, as good religious, accepted them.

In the winter of 1822 Bishop Du Bourg wrote to Father Nerinckx, requesting a colony of Loretines for his diocese of St. Louis.<sup>7</sup> Father Nerinckx gladly acquiesced and expressed his deep satisfaction on hearing that Father Rosati, Superior of the Seminary of St. Mary at the Barrens, was willing to accept the direction of the young colony of sisters. The first letter of Father Nerinckx in regard to the Loretines to be sent to Missouri, was written to Father Joseph Rosati, C. MD., at the Barrens, dated Loretto, 15 January, 1823. In this letter Father Nerinckx expresses his readiness to send on a band of nine sisters to the Barrens, and asks that, beside the log-house which they are to inhabit, they should have a chapel of their own. He declares his wish to have the new-house distinguished by some name that bore some relation to the sufferings of Our Lord and his Blessed Mother. The foundation was named Bethlehem.<sup>8</sup>

In the meantime Father Rosati had been appointed Coadjutor to Bishop Du Bourg. There is a note of anxiety in Father Nerinckx's letter as to the alterations that might possibly be made in the rules and practices of his dear Loretine Sisterhood: changes, as he believed, not for the better but for the worse, Father Nerinckx may have been too fearful in the matter, yet in principle he was certainly right. There is no greater danger to the religious life, than a lax Rule or lax observance of the Rule.

All preparations for the exodus were now completed and a long and interesting letter was despatched to Bishop Du Bourg giving brief character-sketches of the thirteen sisters that made up the colony of the future Bethlehem in the Diocese of St. Louis. Father Nerinckx reiterates his injunctions as to the necessity of maintaining the Rule. There are now six house with one hundred and thirty Sisters. "Our only aim,"

---

<sup>7</sup> Our account of this later phase of Father Nerinckx's life is based on the original letters addressed to Bishop Du Bourg and Rosati, preserved in the Archives of the St. Louis Archdiocese and first published in Rothensteiner's "Father Charles Nerinckx and his Relations to the Diocese of St. Louis," in *St. Louis Cath. Hist. Society*," vol. I. pp. 157 ss.

<sup>8</sup> Rothensteiner, *l. cit.*, p. 160.

he says, "in starting the poor institute was to provide a Catholic School for girls of the lower classes."<sup>9</sup>

The Convent of Bethlehem was now established; the sisters were happy amid their hardships, and sent glowing accounts of their new home to the Sisters at Loretto. Father Nerinckx felt relieved and very grateful. He wrote a touching letter in excellent Latin, to Bishop Rosati, Dated September 24, 1823, in which he gratefully acknowledges the paternal solicitude rendered to his one time, "Lorettones," now Bishop Rosati's "Bethlehemites."<sup>10</sup>

Father Nerinckx's life was drawing to a close, as he himself expressed it. But the storm was already brewing that was to drive him away from the scene of his long and fruitful labors, A Brother Priest, Father Guy Chabrat, the Confessor to the Lorettones at Bethania Church, was the prime mover of an attempt to change that which was dearest to the heart of Father Nerinckx, the Rule of the Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross. Father Nerinckx resented this uncalled-for interference and strenuously resisted the attempt. The piety of Father Nerinckx was described by Father Chabrat as visionary, his government as too rigorous, the practices he prescribed as too austere. But a valiant fighter as Father Nerinckx was in the cause of righteousness and justice, he would not give scandal by continuing the quarrel, in which he saw Bishop Flaget on the side of his opponent. The desire, long repressed of going among the Indians, or of leading the life of a hermit in the wilderness of Missouri, filled his heart to overflowing.<sup>11</sup>

Bishop Rosati was glad to make such an acquisition for St. Louis, as was offered in the person of Father Nerinckx; and he wrote to him about a tract of land which he thought suitable. Father Nerinckx's answer is dated Loretto, Ky., January 1824. Bishop Flaget, however, was not willing to let the grand old man and missionary leave his diocese. Yet, Nerinckx held that he was justified in his proposed course to seek a new home in the woods.

Among other causes for his desire to withdraw from the cares of the public ministry, the good Father touches on a question of Theology which has since that time exercised and disturbed many a mind and heart, the question of usury or taking interest on money lent. The Church had always held that money was unproductive and should not bear interest. Usury in all its ramifications was sinful. But the opinion

<sup>9</sup> Rothensteiner, 1. cit., p. 163.

<sup>10</sup> Rothensteiner, 1. cit., p. 166.

<sup>11</sup> Father Guy Chabrat, the second Superior of the Loretto Sisterhood, in June, 1826, moved the Motherhouse from Hardin's Creek to the Farm of St. Stephen's. This is the new Loretto. The Sisters themselves on their departure set fire to the old Loretto Convent.

gradually prevailed that modern conditions of business had made a change imperative, and that a reasonable rate of interest was permissible, so that the word usury would apply only to an excessive rate of interest. Father Nerinckx's remarks on this vexed question may seem strange in our capitalistic age: but they are based on facts, and so merit our attention.<sup>12</sup>

In conclusion Father Nerinckx touched upon a new St. Louis project.

As early as 1823 a "Female Charitable Society," consisting of ladies, Catholic and Protestant, French and American, had been founded in St. Louis, intended to ameliorate the conditions of the poor and sick and the orphans. In consequence of the exertions of these good ladies a movement was inaugurated to obtain a colony of the Lorettes for the purpose of caring for the sick and the orphans. Father Nerinckx heard of this plan, and expressed his willingness to further it. Nothing came of the matter at that time. A project of far greater importance began to agitate the old lion's soul. Bishop-elect Rosati had notified Father Nerinckx of his coming consecration as Bishop of Tenagra and Coadjutor of Bishop Du Bourg, which was to take place at Donaldsonville, on March 25th, 1824. Hereupon Father Nerinckx sent a letter of hearty congratulation, and at the same time offered to bring all his sisters to the diocese of St. Louis. This letter is the last one addressed to Bishop Rosati from Loretto. It is dated January 24th, 1824, Alluding to the grave misunderstanding that had arisen between him and Bishop Flaget, he says:

"It will cause me to make still more diligence in leaving these parts. The Bishop told me, if I went, I could take the sisters along with me. I know not whether he was in earnest, but supposing he was and they would, perhaps some might have the notion to follow such a poor leader, could they find a place, or be received in your diocese or anywhere in your parts? What number? And what means to transport them? I have some money to bear expenses, but then to find a place. I would decline to be their director except for a while, if I should suit. Providence perhaps, which permits this little change, might provide. I wish before-hand to come to your parts, unless you could and would give sufficient information by writing, which by this present I humbly request you to do as soon as possible. I wish your Lordship to recommend this affair to the Sisters of Bethlehem, that the Lord may be honored by it."<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Rothensteiner, l. c. p., 169.

<sup>13</sup> Rothensteiner, l. c., p. 171.

This desperate plan of removing the entire Sisterhood of more than two hundred persons from Kentucky to Missouri was, of course, impossible, yet, Bishop Flaget's hasty word rankled in the good Father's heart. Besides, the Bishop had informed him as to complaints urged against him. There was no alternative but to leave Kentucky. On the 29th of May 1824, he wrote the farewell letter, "to the dear Mother, Mothers and Sisters of the Loretto House and Society," in which he gives a brief account of his life and states the three great causes for his departure:

1. The impossibility of holding out for want of temporals, having no help but from Europe;
2. The sake of peace which is already somewhat interrupted;
3. The rest and tranquillity of conscience, "which I cannot have here on account of difficulties in practice, which are lately come and surely increased, for which it seems no remedy can be obtained. These are the main motives."<sup>14</sup>

On the 16th day of June 1824, Father Nerinckx left Loretto and on July 2nd, 1824, he arrived at Bethlehem near St. Mary's Seminary, Perry County, Missouri.

"The Sisters were not expecting him," says Sister Eulalia, "he stepped into the hall and thus took them by surprise." Going to the chapel he gave benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and then departed for the Seminary, where he remained a few weeks. On the 26th of July, he left the Barrens, said Mass for the last time in the Sister's chapel at Bethlehem, and then rode away to St. Louis. From St. Louis he made a visit to his friends, the Jesuit Fathers at Florissant; thence he returned to St. Louis, made arrangements with the Indian agent in regard to sending twelve Indian girls to Bethlehem. On the 2nd of August he set out for Bethlehem convent, full of glad anticipations in regard to his Indian venture. On his way, however, he stopped at a little village,<sup>15</sup> where he preached, heard confessions, and said Mass, and even started a building fund for a new church. But the exertions undergone by the noble priest brought on a fever. In company of Mr. James Van Rysselberge, Father Nerinckx set out for Ste. Genevieve, where he was received with great kindness by the Pastor, Father Dahmen, C. M. On Sunday, August 8th, Brother James assisted him into the chapel. Unable to say Mass, he would at least attend.

On August 12th, 1824, at five o'clock in the evening Father Nerinckx expired in the 63rd year of his age. His remains were buried in the humble church-yard of Bethlehem. Bishop Rosati performed the last

<sup>14</sup> Maes, op. cit., pp. 521 and 522.

<sup>15</sup> French Village, also called Little Canada.

sacred rites. In December 1833, the remains of Father Nerinckx were translated to Loretto and reinterred in the Sisters' Cemetery, where a beautiful monument was erected over his tomb.

A most beautiful and touching tribute to the memory of the Apostle of Kentucky was rendered by Bishop Flaget, and published in the *United States Catholic Miscellany*, Wednesday, December 8th, 1824.

One hundred years have elapsed since Father Charles Nerinckx passed to his eternal reward. But, as Bishop Flaget wrote, "he still lives amongst us in his works," and the Archdiocese of St. Louis may well be proud of its early intimate relations to the saintly Founder of the Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross, and the resourceful pathfinder for the Jesuits to their earlier field of glory on the banks of the Mississippi River.

## THE INDIAN MISSIONS AND THE JESUITS

In answer to some of his friends in Europe who had gently disapproved of his waste of time and energy, and money on foreign lands which might be more profitably spent on France itself, the Bishop of Louisiana pointed out the essential humanity of educating and christianizing the Indians.

"Turn then your eyes, "he wrote," on hundreds of Indian tribes that seem but to wait for instruction in order to embrace the faith. How touched you would be if you could see the frequent deputations which I receive from them, the religious respect which they testify to me, and the urgent prayers which they address to me, to be their father, to visit them, and to give them men of God. In the midst of the great sadness which the view of so many of my neglected children causes me, I am beginning to experience the consolation of seeing the seed of the word bear fruit."<sup>1</sup>

Father Eugene Michaud, who came to the American Mission with Odin, J. B. Blanc, Audizio, Peyretti and Caretta in 1822, and was raised to the priesthood by Bishop Du Bourg on September 22nd, of the same year, "a pious and learned young man, with an excellent character, and, above all, very good judgment," wrote a few letters for the *Annals of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith*, concerning the Louisiana missions. We cull from his account the following passages in regard to the early missionary activities among the Indians of the Western Plains.

"In 1820, a number of chiefs of the Osage nation came to St. Louis by the order of the Indian agent.<sup>2</sup> Sans-Nerf (principal chief of this nation) was at their head. They all visited our Bishop, whom they call the 'Chief of the Black Robes'. As they have a high opinion of him, and as respect for priests seems natural to them, since they know by tradition that 'Black Robes' visited their forefathers, they came in full dress. Their copper-colored bodies were coated with grease, their faces and arms were striped in different colors, white lead, vermillion, verdigris and other colors formed a great variety of furrows, all starting

---

<sup>1</sup> Du Bourg to a Friend in Europe about 1818, in "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. I, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> William Clark, one of the leaders of the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806. The Osage Indians had been on friendly terms with the Jesuit Fathers of Kaskaskia under the French Regime.

at the nose. Their hair was arranged in tufts. Bracelets, ear-rings, rings in their noses and lips completed their head-dress. Their shoes are made of buckskin which they ornament with different designs in feathers of various colors; hanging from their robes are little pieces of tin, shaped like small pipes. These are to them the most beautiful ornaments. Their great object is to make a noise when they walk or dance. Their heads are ornamented with a sort of crown in which are mixed up birds' heads, bears' claws and little stag's horns. A woollen robe hung over the shoulders, covers nearly all the rest of the body; and again, to this robe are fastened the tails of different animals, etc. Such is the attire in which the chiefs of the Osages paid their respects to the Bishop of Louisiana. He has in his room a handsome ivory crucifix, a small picture of St. Thomas, and a few other paintings. The sight of the crucifix struck them with astonishment. They gazed at it, their expression wondering and softened. The Bishop profited by this occasion to announce to them Jesus Christ. 'Behold' (said he to them through the interpreter who accompanied them), 'behold the Son of the Master of Life, who came down from heaven to earth, who died for us as much for the redskins as for the white skins. It was to gain our happiness that He suffered so much and that He shed all His blood. It is He,' added the Bishop, 'who has sent me here to make known to you His will.'

"It is impossible, the Bishop said, to describe the attention that all these poor savages paid to him, and the emotion which they experienced when the interpreter repeated to them the words of the Bishop. They raised their eyes and their hands to heaven and then to the crucifix. All the spectators were moved by the scene. Before taking leave of the Bishop, Sans-Nerf said to him through the interpreter, that if he wished to come and visit them in their homes he would be well received; that he could do a great deal of good, and that he could pour waters on many heads. The Bishop promised to do so, and presented each one with a little crucifix and also a medal which he hung around their necks by a ribbon, admonishing them to guard them carefully. They promised him to do so, and have kept their word."<sup>3</sup>

Bishop Du Bourg, enthusiastic as he was, and of a romantic turn of mind, at once decided to assist the Osages himself, and De Andreis was to accompany him. But De Andreis died, and Bishop Du Bourg had so many calls on his time and talent, and cherished as many grand dreams, that he soon decided to entrust the Osage Mission to one of his most excellent priests, Father Charles de La Croix. As the beginnings of a great undertaking, be they ever so humble, deserve to be remembered in all their details, we will give entire the second part of Father

---

3 "*Annales de la Propagation*," vol. I, pp. 53 and 54.

Michaud's letter, which treats more fully of the events that transpired in the first Osage Mission:

"In 1821 Father La Croix set out to open the mission to these savages. On the occasion of his first visit, as they were about to depart on a hunting expedition, he could only see one village. He was very well received and baptized a great many children. As he had promised to visit all the villages of the nation of Indians, he was obliged to return last summer. He left Florissant, which is situated five leagues from St. Louis, on the 22nd of July. After traveling twelve days on horseback across prairies, broken by forests and streams, he reached the first village which he had already visited in the spring. They were delighted to see him again. He was accompanied by several persons who intended to trade with the savages. All the warriors came to meet them.

They were conducted, with great honor to the head chief and invited to feasts, prepared by the savages, and so were kept going until evening, from cabin to cabin. At these repasts they were presented with a wooden dish, filled with boiled maize or buffalo meat (*boeuf sauvage*), but each dish had to be duly tasted.

The head chief and six of his principal warriors offered to accompany the missionary in his visit to the other villages. Ten days were passed thus, and the missionary was received everywhere with the same eagerness. At one of these villages more than a hundred warriors, covered from head to foot with their handsomest ornaments, came quite a distance to meet him. They rode finely trained horses. The occupations of the men are war and hunting. The women are very hard working. They it is who build the cabins, and who carry loads of firewood on their backs. The quantity they take at one time is astonishing. The whole nation is clothed, decently at least. Everyone is covered with a robe.

Polygamy is practiced among them, for it is the custom that, when a savage demands a girl in marriage and is accepted, not only she, but all her sisters also belong to him and are looked upon as his wives. They pride themselves greatly upon having several wives. Another great obstacle to their civilization lies in their strong distaste for the cultivation of the soil and for all kinds of work. They care for nothing but war and hunting.

One day the missionary celebrated the Holy Sacrifice. All the chiefs were present, and also as many savages as the place would hold. He has told me that he was greatly moved by the respectful attention which they showed, and the exactitude with which they rose and knelt, raising their arms and eyes to heaven. After Mass he distributed to all the chiefs a number of crosses, fastened to ribbons, which he threw around their necks. He also baptized several children.

The soil of this portion of Missouri is very fertile, and there are prairies six or seven leagues in extent. In summer the heat is excessive. It was during this journey that the missionary was attacked by burning fever, which forced him to leave the Osages. He was obliged to travel, twelve days on horseback, sleeping at night in the woods, not coming across a single miserable cabin. This is how they go about arranging their camp. Having chosen the most suitable place, they unload and unharness the horses, which they let run loose in the woods that they may pasture during the night. They build a hut with the branches of trees, and having gathered wood they light a big fire. Over this they boil a piece of young buck placed on a stick planted before the fire, the meat being turned from time to time. This fire serves also to drive away bears and other wild beasts. After their repast, they roll themselves up in a buffalo skin and fatigue renders this poor bed very comfortable.”<sup>4</sup>

As Father Michaud intimates, the chief obstacles to the conversion of the Indians, were, next to the wandering instinct and lazy life of the Indian himself, the trader with his fire water, and the salaried preacher with his calumnies and impositions. “For several years Protestant missionaries, sent out and well paid by the American government, had been settled among these savages, and had built up establishments where they cared for the children of this nation for a certain time. But they were not successful, and nearly a year ago the Indians took away all their children, saying that they had realized that they were not Black-robos, as they had thought they were at first.”<sup>5</sup>

Black-robos, that is Catholic priests, these poor people wanted. “Their affection for the Black-robos is touching, especially for the French priests,” writes Father Michaud’s companion on the voyage to America, John Marie Odin, then in deacon’s order. “Some time ago, a great number of savages were in St. Louis. One of them was taken on some errand to a house where the Bishop happened to be. The moment he perceived the Bishop, he ran to him, seized his hand and kissed it with every demonstration of friendship. Having departed without remembering to go through the same ceremony, he recalled his mistake, only when already at some distance from the house. He turned back immediately,

---

<sup>4</sup> Annales, vol. I, pp. 57 and 58. Father Garraghan’s “Saint Ferdinand de Florissant” contains a chapter, the seventh, on Father Charles De La Croix. Monsignor Holweck in the “Pastoral-Blatt,” July, 1919, gives a well-authenticated sketch. Bishop Du Bourg was won’t to call this noble priest his “angel.” Mother Du Chesne admired him for his angelic piety and absolute fearlessness.

<sup>5</sup> Annales, vol. I, p. 58. Records, vol. XIV.

running all the way, and uttering loud cries, kissed the Bishop's hand and departed once more."<sup>6</sup>

The Administration of President James Monroe, was hailed as the "era of good feeling." All danger of foreign interference seemed to have been eliminated by the so-called Monroe Doctrine, and the government could now apply all its energies to internal affairs. The Indian population demanded special attention. The Indian wars, though confined to the frontier, had been very costly in blood and treasure. Education was proclaimed as the panacea for all evils. The Indians were to share in its blessings. The President and John C. Calhoun, the Secretary of War, expressed their willingness to aid in a substantial manner those who would undertake the task of civilizing and christianizing the Indians. "Upon the whole" as Von Holst says, "he (Calhoun) advocated a policy towards these wards of the nation which it would have been well for all parties concerned to adopt and pursue with undeviating honesty. Even in our days his Indian reports might be profitably studied with regard as well to the cardinal mistakes committed in the Indian policy as to what ought to be done."<sup>7</sup>

Congress had set apart the sum of \$10,000.00 for the purpose of aiding the schools that were then and might be established for the instruction of young Indians. Secretary Calhoun, into whose hands the distribution of the fund was laid, announced that "Government will, if it has the means, and approves the arrangement, pay two-thirds of the expense of erecting the necessary buildings. The President of the United States will contribute out of the annual appropriation to each institution which may be approved by him, a sum proportionate to the number of pupils belonging to each, regard being had to the necessary expense of the establishment and the degree of success which has attended it.

"But it will be indispensable, in order to apply any portion of the sum appropriated in the manner proposed, that the plan of education, in addition to reading, writing and arithmetic, should in the instruction of boys, extend to the practical knowledge of the mode of agriculture, and of such of the mechanic arts as are suited to the condition of the Indians; and in that of the girls, to spinning, weaving and sewing. It is also indispensable that the establishment should be fixed within the limits of those Indian nations who border on our settlements."<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Annales, vol. I, p. 52. Records, vol. XIV, p. 181.

<sup>7</sup> Von Holst, John C. Calhoun in "American Statesmen Series," p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> Calhoun's Circular, Feb. 29, 1820, supplementary to that of September 3, 1819, both published in "American Catholic Historical Researches," vol. X, pp. 154-159.

In the additional regulations issued by Secretary Calhoun, it was stated that regard would be had, not only to the number of pupils of each institution, but also to the necessary expense incurred and the degree of success attained. Bishop Du Bourg saw his opportunity. In a letter to the Secretary, under date of February 15th, 1823, he developed his plan of civilizing the Indians of Missouri: "The work of civilization should commence with harmonizing them by the kind doctrine of Christianity, instilled into their minds, not by the doubtful and tedious process of books, but by familiar conversation, striking representations, and by the pious lives of their spiritual leaders.

"Men, disenthralled from all family cares, abstracted from every earthly enjoyment, inured to fatigue and self-denial... are well calculated to strike the child of nature as a supernatural species of beings, entitled to almost implicit belief. Thus their unremitting charity will easily subdue the ferocity of their hearts, and by degrees, assimilate their inclinations to those of their fellow-christians. "I would be for abandoning the whole management of that great work to the prudence of missionaries as the best judges of the means to be progressively employed to forward the great object of their own sacrifices. Such at least was always the policy observed in Catholic Indian missions, the success of which in almost every instance answered and often surpassed every prudent expectation.

Upon these principles I would be willing to send a few missionaries, by way of trial at least, among the Indians of Missouri, should Government be disposed to encourage the undertaking. The Appropriation of monies for the object, being, I understand, very limited and in a great measure already disposed of, I feel extremely delicate in proffering any specific demand. I would only beg to observe, that hardly a less sum than 200 dollars would suffice to procure a missionary the indispensable necessities of life. With this abridged view of the subject, I beg you will have the goodness to inform me, Sir, whether and to what extent, Government would be willing to favor my scheme: 1. What allowance it would grant to each missionary? 2. To how many that support might be extended? 3. In case establishments could be made, what help would be made towards them either in money or land?"<sup>9</sup>

The President and Secretary Calhoun gave their hearty approval, saying that the Government would contribute \$200.00 annually towards the support of the missionaries to be sent out. But, for the present only three were to be sent. The Government would also contribute towards the expense of the buildings for the accommodation of the missionaries.

---

<sup>9</sup> Du Bourg to Calhoun, February 15, 1823. Original letter in "Indian Office Records."

Further encouragement would be extended in accordance with the results attained.

Cheered by this initial success with the Government the Bishop asked and obtained the pledge that four instead of three missionaries would receive the annual allowance of \$200.00. From the Bishop's letter it appears that these missionaries were intended for the tribes on the Upper Missouri, and Mississippi, Council Bluffs, Prairie du Chien and Riviere St. Pierre. William Clark, the Indian Agent at St. Louis, was instructed by Calhoun, to befriend the missionaries in their endeavors. "It is believed," says the Secretary to General Clark, "that the missionaries will, besides preparing the way for their ultimate civilization be useful in preserving peace with the tribes among which they may fix themselves."<sup>10</sup>

So far not a word had been spoken in regard to schools for the Indian children. The plan had in view the erection of Indian missions among the remote tribes, and an allowance of \$200.00 for each of the four missionaries. Bishop Du Bourg now conceived the idea of a school for the training of missionaries. Writing to Secretary Calhoun on March 17th, 1823, he says: "I have the honor to submit to your consideration a plan of operation, which the most serious reflections have presented to me as best calculated to insure permanency to that establishment and to enlarge its sphere of usefulness.

"The basis of that plan would be the formation (on an eligible spot near the confluence of those two large streams) of a *Seminary* or nursery of Missionaries, in which young candidates for that holy function would be trained in all its duties; whilst it would also afford a suitable retreat for such as, through old age, infirmity or any other lawful cause, would be compelled to withdraw from that arduous ministry.—The chief studies pursued in that Seminary would be: the manners of the Indians, the idiom of the principal Nations, and the arts best adapted to the great purpose of civilization.—And, in order to facilitate the attainment of some of these objects, I would at once try to collect in that Institution some Indian youths of the most important tribes, whose habitual converse with the tyros of the Mission, would be mutually of the greatest advantage for the promotion of the ultimate object in contemplation.—The result of that kind of Novitiate would be a noble emulation among the Missionaries, uniformity of system, a constant succession of able and regularly trained Instructors, and a gradual expansion of their sphere of activity.

"I am willing to give for that establishment a fine and well-stocked farm in the rich valley of Florissant about one mile from the river Missouri and fifteen from St. Louis.

---

<sup>10</sup> Calhoun to Clark, "Indian Office Records," Washington, D. C.

Seven young clergymen, from twenty-two to twenty-seven years of age, of solid parts and an excellent Classical education are nearly ready to set off at the first signal under the guidance of two Superiors and professors and with an escort of a few faithful mechanics and husbandmen to commence the foundation. I calculate at about two years the time necessary to consolidate it and to fit out most of those highly promising candidates for the duties of the missions, after which they will be anxious to be sent in different directions according to the views and under the auspices of government, whilst they will be replaced in the Seminary by others destined to continue the noble enterprise.

"So forcibly am I struck with the happy consequences likely to result from the extension of that same project that I hesitate not to believe that Government, viewing it in the same light with myself, will be disposed to offer me towards its completion that generous aid without which I would not be warranted to undertake it . . . .

"It has already condescended to allow \$800 per annum for four missionaries. But it was on the supposition that they would be immediately sent to the Missouri, whilst in the proposed plan the opening of the missions would take place but two years after the opening of the Seminary. Yet though not actually employed among the tribes, the missionaries, whilst yet in their novitiate, would not be less profitably engaged in the cause; since besides having a number of young Indians to feed, to educate and maintain, they would be laying the foundation for far more extended usefulness for the future . . . .

The true object of this memoir is to demand that the allowance granted by government, to be increased, if possible, to \$1000 per annum (on account of the great additional expenses incident on the present scheme) should be paid from the first outset, on my pledging myself as I solemnly do, that, at latest, in two years from the commencement, I will send out five or six missionaries and successively as many more as Government may then be disposed to encourage.

For the attainment of the object of collecting some Indian boys in the Seminary, it would be of great service, Sir, that you should please to invite General Clarke and Colonel O'Fallon to lend me their assistance."<sup>11</sup> This letter bears date of March 17, 1823.

To this communication of Bishop Du Bourg, Secretary Calhoun replied on March 21:

"I have received your letter of the 17th instant and submitted it to the President, (Monroe) for his consideration and direction, who has instructed me to inform you, in reply, that believing the establishment of a school on the principles which you have suggested, is much better calculated to effect your benevolent design of extending the

---

11 Du Bourg to Calhoun, "Indian Office Records."

benefits of civilization to the remote tribes, and with it the just influence of the government, than the plan you formerly proposed for the same object, he is willing to encourage it as far as he can with propriety, and will allow you at the former rate of \$800 per annum to be paid quarter-yearly towards the support of the completed establishment. No advance, however, can be made consistently with the regulations, until the establishment has actually commenced its operations with a suitable number of Indian youths; of which fact and the number of pupils the certificate of General Clark will be the proper evidence.

"A copy of this letter will be sent to General Clark with instructions to give proper orders to such of the Indian agents under his charge, as you may think necessary, to facilitate the collection of the Indian youths to be educated, and to afford every aid in his power to promote the success of the establishment."<sup>12</sup>

These arrangements, though not perfectly satisfactory to the Bishop, were accepted as the basis for further action. Bishop Du Bourg himself writes on this subject to his brother in Bordeaux, March 17, 1823:

"Providence deigns to grant a success to this negotion, far in excess of my hopes. The government bestows upon me two hundred dollars a year for each missionary and that for four or five men, and it promises to increase the number gradually, and I am sure that it will do so. For an enterprise such as this, it was essential that I should have men especially called to this work, and I had almost renounced the hope of ever obtaining such, when God, in His infinite goodness, has brought about one of those incidents which He alone can foresee and direct the results."<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Calhoun to Du Bourg, "Indian Office Records."

<sup>13</sup> *Annales*, vol. I, p. 5. *Records*, vol. XIV, p. 156.

## THE INDIAN MISSIONS AND THE JESUITS

## II

The incident related in the foregoing chapter was the providential answer to Bishop's long and anxious meditations summed up in the following passage of a letter to his brother in Bordeaux:

"I have long been convinced that nothing could be accomplished here without the Religious Orders. A man living isolated from his kind grows weary of the apparent uselessness, of his efforts. The intense heat exhausts his strength and checks his ardor. Too often he loses his life or, in the fear of losing it, he abandons his post. He is fortunate indeed, if he does not prove the truth of those words of the Holy Ghost: "Woe to him who is alone!" and from a being, full of vigor and activity he becomes a good-for-nothing, and the scorn of his fellowmen. There is not the same danger for the religious community. Union makes strength of all kinds. Their members are constantly renewed and increased, hence they are able to provide for their own losses.

It is to this end that I have worked from the very beginning, to secure the help of the Order of Saint Vincent de Paul, and that I have made every effort to induce the Jesuits to come here, the former Order for the seminary, the latter for the Missouri missions, and more especially, for work among the Indians. The expense of all this has been great, but I am far from regretting it."<sup>1</sup>

As early as February 24th, 1821, Bishop Du Bourg had written to the Prefect of the Propaganda, Cardinal Fontana, asking His assistance in gaining the Jesuits for the work of converting the Indians, who, as he states, are very numerous in the upper part of his diocese. The Holy Father, himself wrote to the Superior General with a view to endorse his wishes. But up to that date all efforts had proved unavailing.

"However," concluded Bishop Du Bourg, "I understand that the Superiors of the Society are now showing more willingness to undertake the work. I have accordingly recommended to Father Inglesi<sup>2</sup> to make use of every resource his intelligence and zeal could muster, in order to bring this project to maturity. I beg likewise Your Eminence to second his efforts. There is particularly one of the Fathers of the Society, De Barat by name, now in the Little Seminary of Bordeaux,

---

<sup>1</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. II, p. 394. "Records of the American Catholic Historical Society," vol. XIV, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Father Angelo Inglesi, Bishop Du Bourg's protegee, Vicar-General and proposed Coadjutor.

whom I know to be most anxious to come here; his piety, knowledge and zeal are beyond par. I beg most earnestly the Vicar General to give him to me, and beseech to this end the aid of Your Eminence's most powerful influence. With him some of the younger French Jesuits will be glad to come, and also others, of riper years, from among those who came lately from Russia to France. Five or six at most, would be sufficient, if to them were added two or three from Maryland—a thing most desirable, on account of their knowledge of English, and also because, as they are well provided financially, they could supply the want of their brothers. With this help, the Gospel cannot fail to make headway among the numberless nations on both sides of the Mississippi and the Missouri.”<sup>3</sup>

Bishop Du Bourg petitioned Father Aloysius Fortis, the General of the Jesuits at Rome, for some members of the Society to be established in Louisiana, and received a courteous refusal; but as he himself declares, he seemed to hear out of the refusal the voice of God repeating, “*Et si perseveraberis pulsans, propter improbitatem dabunt.*” Lucas VII., 4.

All applications so far had failed to attain the purpose. But *nil desperandum*, thought Bishop Du Bourg. And really, as, the poet of the Seasons tells us, “What makes the hero truly great, is never, never, to despair.” The Bishop's persistent efforts in this regard were at last to be crowned with perfect success, though not in the manner he had expected.

There was at Whitemarsh near Baltimore a Novitiate of the Jesuits whom Father Nerinecx had brought from Belgium in 1821. Their Master of Novices was Father Charles Felix Van Quickenborne, a native of Ghent. Born January 21st, 1788, the energetic young man, after being raised to priesthood, and acting as Vicar of a parish in Ghent and as Professor at the Seminary of Rottanen, was admitted into the Novitiate of the Jesuits at Roulers. During this time he had as pupil Ferdinand Helias de Huddeghem.

It was the good Father's love and sympathy for the benighted Indians that inspired the desire of going to America, in teacher as well as in pupil. The young missionary Charles Van Quickenborne obtained permission to go, and arrived in Georgetown at the end of 1817. The student Helias was obliged to wait a few years.

Father Van Quickenborne was appointed Master of Novices within four years after his ordination. The novices were making excellent progress under their kind and sympathetic master: but a dark cloud had arisen over the institution threatening disaster to all. Owing to

---

<sup>3</sup> Archives of Propaganda, Scrittura Referite, Cod. 7, America Centrale, published by Dr. Souvay in “Documents from Our Archives.” “St. Louis Catholic Historical Review,” vol. II, p. 136.

a heavy indebtedness of the Society, and a dispute with the Archbishop of Baltimore concerning the title of ownership to Whitemarsh Plantation, the Jesuit Superior was about to dissolve the Novitiate, so auspiciously begun. The Father Superior, Charles Neale, on hearing of Bishop Du Bourg's desire to have a colony of Jesuits for the Western Missions, freely offered him the entire Novitiate at Whitemarsh. Bishop Du Bourg was surprised and delighted. It was a boon he could never have expected and it came at the crucial moment. The government furnishing the means for a grand advance, and here were the men to undertake it.

A Concordate with many important clauses was drawn up at once and signed by Bishop Du Bourg for the Diocese of Louisiana, and Father Charles Neale in behalf of the Society of Jesus in the United States. This was in accordance with the request Cardinal Pedicini made to the Bishop in 1821, "to define and circumscribe the limits of the mission to be placed entirely under the care of the Jesuit Fathers, so that no collision or disturbance arise subsequently." This remarkable document was dated March 19, 1823.

*A Concordat or Agreement.*<sup>4</sup>

Entered into by the Rt. Rev. Louis Wm. Du Bourg, Bishop of New Orleans, on the one part, with the Rev. Father Charles Neale, Superior of the Society of Jesus in the United States of America, on the other part, respecting the missions about to be undertaken by the said Society in the Diocese of the said prelate.

The Rt. Rev. Bishop of New Orleans, animated by the desire of propagating and extending the Gospel through his extensive diocese, and anxious to promote as much as possible, the temporal as well as the spiritual welfare of the numerous savage tribes inhabiting the shores of the Missouri and its tributary streams, by conferring on them the benefits and comforts of civilization and at the same time instructing them in the ways of God and opening their eyes to the truths of His holy Religion, as taught by Jesus Christ His Divine Son and proposed by the Church, seizes with joy a proposal made to him by the Superior of the Society in the United States, to co-operate with him and to carry into effect so laudable a design, by furnishing him with a number of able and zealous missionaries, who shall immediately proceed to the work. And, in order that a fair understanding may always hereafter subsist between the Bishop of New Orleans and his successors in the See and the Superior of the Society of Jesus and his successors, the following Concordat or Agreement is entered into, and has been signed by each of the

---

<sup>4</sup> This document is transcribed from Bishop Du Bourg's own copy, preserved in the Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Father Neale's copy was published in Hughes', "History of the Society of Jesus in North America," Documents, 1-1021.

parties; and when approved and ratified by his Holiness as well as by the General of the Society in Rome, the same shall be perpetually binding on them and their successors.

1. The Bishop of New Orleans cedes and surrenders to the Society of Jesus for ever, as soon and in proportion as its increase of members enables it to undertake the same, the absolute and exclusive care of all the missions already established and which shall be hereafter established on the Missouri River and its tributary streams; comprising within the above grant and cession the spiritual direction, agreeably to their holy institute, as well of all the white population, as of the various Indian tribes inhabiting the above mentioned district of country together with all the churches, chapels, colleges and seminaries of learning already erected and which shall hereafter be erected, in full conviction of the blessed advantages his diocese will derive from the piety, the learning and the zeal of the members of the said religious Society—Reserving, however, at all times to himself and his successors the right of visiting in charity said portions of his diocese, agreeably to the canons of the Church made and provided; also of requiring the removal of any member or members of the Society from any post or station in the ministry, when such removal for impropriety of conduct is deemed by him necessary; and also of requiring upon all occasions, when a Superior shall desire to withdraw a member or members from any post of the mission, the name of the individual or individuals he appoints to succeed him or them; in order that he (the Bishop) may judge of his or their qualifications, etc., and empower him or them to exercise jurisdiction accordingly.

2. The Bishop, to enable the Superior and the Society to enter immediately upon the work so laudably undertaken by them, engages to cede and transfer to said Society all right and title to a tract of valuable land at Florissant, of which he is now legal proprietor, consisting of three hundred and fifty acres or thereabouts, with all its buildings and improvements, and to make over the same immediately in such way and to such person or persons, in trust for the Society, as the Superior shall think fit.

3. The Bishop furthermore pledges and hereby binds himself and his successors to support, encourage and promote to the best of his ability, and with such pecuniary aid, collections and donations, as his circumstances and means will allow, the missions herein ceded to the Society and their respective establishments, colleges, seminaries, churches, etc., which are and which shall be hereafter made and erected,—and especially the seminary immediately to be commenced on the above mentioned tract of land at Florissant.

4. The Superior of the Society on the other hand engages himself to send immediately to Florissant, in the State of Missouri, two priests

of the Society of Jesus, with seven young men, candidates for the same, for the purpose of forming an establishment there, which shall serve for the present as a seminary of preparation for the objects above specified. He promises moreover to send, with the above, two or three lay-brothers of the same Society, with at least four or five negroes to be employed in preparing and providing the additional buildings that may be found necessary, and in cultivating the land of the above mentioned farm.

5. The Superior also engages that, at the expiration of two years, counting from the time of their arrival, four or five, at least, missionaries duly qualified shall proceed to the remote stations, (i. e.) to the Indian settlements in the vicinity of Council Bluffs, and shall there labor towards the attainment of the great object specified above for the greater honor and glory of God.

6. The Superior pledges himself to foster and promote, as much as he is able the above mentioned missions with their several departments; and, until it shall be deemed necessary for the greater good of the mission to fix upon some other site for the principal residence of the Society engaged in this mission, to retain at the establishment at Florissant at least two capable Fathers, whose chief care it shall be to superintend and to direct the same, in qualifying the youth who shall offer themselves, and who shall have been received there with the approbation of the Superior, for the purpose of the mission.

7. The Bishop of New Orleans in his desire of promoting the establishment about to be commenced at Florissant, and to benefit the mission at large, obligates himself and his successors to pay into the hands of the chief of the mission whatever sum or sums of money the United States Government shall think fit to advance, and to apply towards this object, and to transmit to the same whatever sum or sums it shall hereafter appropriate, and as long as it shall continue to appropriate it or them, towards the furtherance of the work of God in this section.

In confirmation of this mutual agreement this instrument is signed by both parties.

George Town, Dist. of Cla., March 19, A. D., 1823.

L. Wm. Du Bourg, Bp. of N. Orleans.

Charles Neale, Superior of the Mission of the Society of Jesus in the United States of America.

When the Master of Novices at Whitmarsh, was informed of the transaction, he readily acquiesced; his assistant, Father Timmermans likewise: the novices Van Assche, De Smet, Verhaegen, Verreidt, Elet, Smedts, De Maillet and the Brothers, Peter De Meyer, Henry Reisselman and James Strahan expressed their joy at going to the West, "We left

our home and country for the conversion of the Indians;" they said, "the Indians are in the West, to the West let us go."<sup>5</sup>

In order to procure money for the travelling expenses, Father Van Quickenborne started on a collecting tour in New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, realizing in a short time the sum of one thousand dollars. On April 11th, 1823, at dawn, the entire novitiate left Whitmarsh under the leadership of Father Van Quickenborne, with bag and baggage and six negro slaves, Toni, Moses and Isaac with their respective wives Polly, Nancy and Suecy.

The journey from Whitmarsh to Wheeling was made on foot. Travel by stage-coach seemed beneath contempt and was really beyond their reach. The trunks and the baggage were placed on two large wagons. At their resting places on the way the novices copied Father Plowden's Instructions on Religious Perfection. At Frederick in Maryland the Jesuit Father McElroy presented Father Van Quickenborne with a roan horse, which proved so obstreperous, that Father Van Quickenborne, as he told the giver afterwards "would have sold the animal very promptly, had the opportunity presented itself."

Frederick was the farthestmost western outpost of the Society of Jesus: here the travelers entered upon the Great National Pike Road to the banks of the Ohio. At Cumberland the ascent of the Allegheny Mountains began, replete with beautiful and sublime scenery, but full of toil and danger too. After nine days of mountain travel they reached the hospitable home of a Mr. Thompson, to spend three days of rest and recuperation. Wheeling was reached on May 7th. Here the travelers procured two flat-boats, which they lashed together, and with the help of a "Riverman's Guide" Brother Strahan piloted the happy company down the Ohio to Louisville. Here their joy was made complete by a visit from their friend and benefactor Father Nerinckx, who had come to Louisville to see, safe on board a steamer, the Colony of Loretines destined for the Barrens in Missouri.

The shooting of the Falls of the Ohio was successfully made, four of the novices taking part in the perilous passage, the others, more prudent or less courageous, walking around the point of danger. At Shawneetown they left part of their baggage and began the long journey on foot through the broad expanse of two hundred and fifty miles of prairie to St. Louis, which they reached on Saturday, May 30, 1823. That same evening Father Van Quickenborne rode on horseback to Florissant, accompanied by Father De La Croix. Here the Novitiate of St. Stanislaus was founded by the advent of the pilgrims from Whitmarsh in Maryland. A letter written by Bishop Du Bourg to his brother at Bourdeau, March 17, 1823, throws an interesting sidelight on this providential occurrence:

---

<sup>5</sup> The Indians are in the West; to the West let us go.

"The Jesuits of whom I speak (says he) had their institution in Maryland, and finding themselves embarrassed, were on the point of disbanding their novitiate, when I obtained this pecuniary encouragement from the Government. They have seized this opportunity and have offered to transport the whole novitiate, master and novices, into Upper Louisiana and form there a preparatory school for Indian missionaries. If I had had my choice, I could not have desired anything better. Seven young men, all Flemings, full of talent and of the spirit of Saint Francis Xavier, advanced in their studies, about twenty-two to twenty-seven years of age, with their two excellent masters and some brothers; this is what Providence at last grants to my prayers.

"Near the spot where the Missouri empties into the Mississippi, outside the village of Florissant, already so happy as to possess, the principal institution of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, I have a good yielding farm, excellent soil, which, if well cultivated (which it is not at present), could easily provide sustenance for twenty persons at least, so far as the important question of nourishment is concerned. True, there is only a small house on the place, but in this country a big cabin of rough wood, such as will be suitable for the apostles of the savages, is quickly built. It is there that I will locate this novitiate, which will be, for all time, a seminary especially intended to form missionaries for the Indians and for the civilized and ever-growing population of Missouri. As soon as the actual subjects are ready we will commence the mission in good earnest. In the meantime, I propose to receive in the seminary a half-dozen Indian children from the various tribes, in order to familiarize my young missionaries with their habits and language, and to prepare the Indians to serve as guides, interpreters and aides to the missionaries when they are sent to the scattered tribes."<sup>6</sup>

The rigors of the journey from Whitmarsh to Florissant as well as the kindly reception of the pilgrims at their new home, are briefly sketched by the Bishop:

"These good fathers are in possession of my farm at Florissant. To reach it they walked more than four hundred miles, of which two hundred miles were through inundated country, where the water was often up to their waists; and far from murmuring, they blessed God for granting them such an Apostolic beginning. They were very agreeably surprised, not expecting to find such a pretty place; for it is my policy to speak only of the drawbacks to those whom I invite to share my labors. The superintendent of Indian affairs, upon whom depends much of the success of our missions to the savages, received them with an interest both kind and active, and shows, himself in an especial way, their protector."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Annales*, vol. I, 5, pp. 37-41; *Records*, vol. XIV, pp. 150 and 152.

<sup>7</sup> *Annales*, vol. I, 5, pp. 37-41; *Records*, vol. XIV, p. 153.

They certainly deserved the hearty praise of the Bishop who says: "The Fathers, including their novices, are well calculated to inspire confidence. An unlimited devotedness, which is proof again the greatest dangers and privations, is associated in them with rare goodness and talents of a high order. They complain of nothing, they are satisfied with everything. Living in the closest quarters in a little house, sleeping on skins for want of mattresses, living on corn and pork, they are happier than the rich on their down-beds, surrounded by luxury, because they know happiness far more exquisite, and are not hampered by self-indulgence. It is my duty, however, to try to procure for them, at least the necessaries of life, and also the means of exercising their zeal and extending their field of labor. It is in this that I hope to be seconded by the Association of the Propagation of the Faith."<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> *Annales*, vol. I, 5, pp. 37-41; *Records*, vol. XIV, p. 154.



THE JESUIT NOVITIATE



## THE JESUIT BEGINNINGS AT ST. FERDINAND

Father Van Quickenborne with his little Jesuit community of one priest and six novices were now ready to take possession of what was called the Bishop's Farm, a tract of land of about 212 acres in the Common Field of St. Ferdinand, which according to the Concordat was to be the Jesuit Fathers' property. But Bishop Du Bourg had leased the place for ten years to a Mr. O'Neil, who demanded the payment of 400 dollars, ere he would give peaceable possession to Father Van Quickenborne. An amicable settlement of the unpleasant matter was finally arranged, and the community set to work to make the buildings on the farms inhabitable. How poor and devoid of all comfort these cabins were appears from a description made by Father Walter Hill who saw them in 1847.

"The dwelling given up to them by Mr. O'Neil was a log cabin containing one room, which was sixteen by eighteen feet, in dimensions; and over it was a loft, but not high enough for a man to stand erect in it, except when directly under the comb of the roof. This poorly lighted and ventilated loft, or garret was made the dormitory of the seven novices, their beds consisting of pallets spread upon the floor. The room below was divided into two by a curtain, one part being used as a chapel and the other serving as bedroom for Fathers Van Quickenborne and Timmermans. This main room of the cabin had a door on the south-east or front; a large window on the north-west side; without sash or glass but closed with a heavy board shutter; on the south-west side was a notable chimney with a fire-place having a capacity for logs of eight feet in length. At a distance of about eighty feet to the north-east of the building were two smaller cabins, some eight feet apart, one of which was made to serve as a study hall for the novices, and as a common dining-room for the community; the other was used as a kitchen and for lodging the negroes. These rude structures were covered with rough boards, held in place by weight poles; the floors were 'puncheons,' and the doors were riven slabs, and their wooden latches were lifted with strings hanging outside."<sup>1</sup>

But nothing daunted, the Superior added a second story to the main building, and surrounded the house with a gallery. In making excavations for a wing to the structure, the scholastics, Van Assche, De Smet, Verhaegen and Verreidt, were each assigned a quarter section of the proposed cellar. The timber was procured from an island in the Missouri river.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hill, Walter H., S. J., "Historical Sketch of St. Louis University," p. 282

The work of cutting and handling the logs was done by the novices and the negro slaves. De Smet is reported to have been the champion with the axe, whilst Van Assche excelled all others with the spade and mattock. Father De Smet left us an interesting record of these exhilarating experiences.

"Every day after breakfast the Rector led his little band with cross-cut saw, and each one with an axe in his hand, to an island in the Missouri River, three miles distant, containing about a thousand acres of forest trees of all sizes. They were free to all comers, so that we had our choice of chopping and felling. Hundreds of logs were secured and safely landed ashore and hauled to St. Stanislaus. These logs were intended for the construction of two large cabins of hewn timbers, for rafters, servant cabins, stables and barns. This immense forest island, which was just above the Charboniere, shortly after disappeared in a great rise and freshet of the Missouri River, not leaving a vestige of tree or soil. It stood on a flat, naked bed of lime stone rock, on which it had been forming perhaps for centuries, as some of the largest trees seemed to indicate."<sup>2</sup>

Father Van Quickenborne wrote: "Our house will be comfortable and spacious enough to lodge two or three fathers more. The Novices agreed on all this and did the work willingly and joyfully." Funds were, however, growing less, and there was no source from which they could be replenished. Bishop Du Bourg, indeed, had pledged himself to support, encourage and promote the Jesuit Missions and foundations to the best of his ability and with such pecuniary aid, collections, and donations, as his circumstances and means would allow." He also recognized his duty "to try to procure for them, at least, the necessities of life, and also the means of exercising their zeal and extending their field of labor. "It is in this," he said, "that I hope to be seconded by the Association of the Propagation of the Faith."<sup>3</sup>

In the meantime the six novices, Peter Verhaegen, John Baptist Smedts, John Felix Verreidt, Jodocus Van-Assche, Peter John De Smet and John Elet were permitted to pronounce the three simple vows that made them members of the Society of Jesus.

The first winter at St. Ferdinand was noted for its severity. The building operations had to be suspended, although all the material was on hand. Another winter in the old lodgings might have been disastrous. Work was resumed in the Spring and the house was furnished in the summer of 1824.

---

<sup>2</sup> Garraghan, S. J., "History of the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus," in MS.

<sup>3</sup> Du Bourg to his Brother, August 6, 1823. "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. I, 5, pp. 41 and 42.

But troubles were multiplying for the good Superior of the Jesuit Novitiate: his only assistant, Father Peter Timmermans, died unexpectedly. He had been in feeble health for some time; yet he continued his missionary work without complaint. On Sunday, May 30, he held usual services at St. Charles, but was unable to preach. Returning to the Novitiate, he retired for the night, hoping that he would be well in the morning. Father Van Quickenborne left the house for St. Louis, having been assured that Father Timmerman's ailment was not of a serious nature. In the afternoon, however, the patient grew worse and shortly afterwards died. Father Timmermans was buried on the following Tuesday in the parish Church of St. Ferdinand. "He died like a soldier, with armor in hand on the field of battle, in the actual exercise of his truly apostolic zeal. His death has produced the effect which is ordinarily produced by the death of a saint,"<sup>4</sup> was the final judgment pronounced on Father Timmermans by his brother in arms, Father Van Quickenborne. But the loss must be repaired, or the foundation is doomed, thought the Superior, and immediately requested that Father Dubuisson be sent to St. Ferdinand. "It is a dreadful thought, in moments of depression, to think oneself abandoned. Our difficulties must needs increase with the arrival of the Indians. Those that we have are quite sick. If we are to have with the Indians the success we look for, it is imperative that some Father be sent to us: and would to God that he may come as Superior. I ask your Reverence to send us Father Dubuisson."<sup>5</sup>

Again and again, Father Van Quickenborne's cry for help went out to his Superior in Maryland, but no help came. "This is alarming," he wrote, "I hope that Father Dubuisson with Brother Meade, have by this time started."<sup>6</sup> But the year drew to a close, and the petition for help, still remained unanswered. Father Van Quickenborne had to tread the wine-press alone. Yet an unexpected recognition of his worth came to him in his distress.

Father Rosati, who had now become Coadjutor Bishop, in December of the same year appointed Father Van Quickenborne his Vicar General for Upper Louisiana. Bishop Du Bourg also interceded with the Jesuit Superior in Maryland for the "infant establishment" in Missouri.

All the Catholic population of Missouri west of St. Louis was in the care of Father Van Quickenborne. In order to fulfill his obligation at least in some measure, he said mass every Sunday at the village church of St. Ferdinand, whither all the inmates of the Novitiate repaired for the occasion.

---

<sup>4</sup> Van Quickenborne to his Maryland Superior, Father Dzorizynski, June 3, 1824, in "Archives of Georgetown," furnished me by Father Garraghan.

<sup>5</sup> Van Quickenborne to Dzorizynski, *ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> *Idem*, *ibidem*.

St. Charles and Portage des Sioux were visited once a month, on some week-day. The scholastics Elet and Verhaegen visited St. Charles, holding prayer-service and giving catechetical instructions. Two other scholastics attended Florissant in a similar manner. In April 1825 the Father Superior spent a full week in visiting the outlying western stations, Hancock Prairie, Cote-sans-dessein and Franklin.

Bishop Du Bourg cautioned the zealous missionary against overworking himself, and suggested to him the advisability of having two of the scholastics raised to the priesthood. Father Van Quickenborne was not averse to the Bishop's suggestion and submitted the names of Smedts and Verreidt. They would be ready for ordination in September 1825. Yet circumstances necessitated a delay of almost a year. Father Van Quickenborne was attacked by a malignant fever and for a time expected to die. Gradually sinking under the strain, he wrote to Father Dzierozynski, his Superior in Maryland, to send him help. The Novitiate now lacking novices, had become a Scholasticate, a house of Studies, and the Rector appointed two of the scholastics, Elet and Verhaegen, Professors of Dogmatic Theology and of Sacred Scripture. Father Van Quickenborne took the class of Moral Theology, which, however, he was soon forced to relinquish in favor of his many other spiritual and temporal concerns. Sometimes the scholastics were left without Mass for a week at a time. The Professor of Dogma, M. Elet, wrote to Father Dzierozynski: "Would that you could send us," so young Elet expressed himself, "Father De Theux, a man remarkable alike for piety and learning. Then we would forget the past and make light of the discomforts created here by an oppressive climate, incessant rains and unfinished house. We should gladly take upon ourselves the work of the house and even spend our recreation days outdoors in manual labor."<sup>7</sup>

What neither Bishop nor Superior could accomplish, was quickly attained by Elet, the Scholastic: Father De Theux was appointed to the vacancy left by Father Timmerman's death. John Theodore Mary-Joseph De Theux was born at Liege, on January 25, 1789. He was of noble extraction, his father being the Count De Theux. Being the eldest son and heir of the house, the young John Theodore resigned his rights in favor of his brother Bartholomew, and followed the divine call into the priesthood. He was ordained at Namur on the Feast of St. Aloysius 1812, and became Vicar of St. Nicholas at Liege. The hospitals of the city were crowded with sick Spanish prisoners. Father De Theux went in to them to bring spiritual help and consolation and thus contracted the pestilence. Nursed back to health under the roof of his parents, he was appointed Administrator of the diocese of Liege, whilst teaching Dogmatic Theology in the Seminary.

---

<sup>7</sup> Elet to Dzierizynski, December 31, 1825, *ibidem*.

The tireless servant of God, Father Nerinckx, met Father De Theux and won him over to the American Missions. In March 1816 he was on his way overseas with Father Leken. Both sought and obtained admission into the Jesuit Mission of Maryland. After a novitiate of two years Father De Theux was admitted to the first vows, and now, after six years of parochial work in Georgetown, he was sent to the Far West, with Brother O'Connor as companion. On the way he learnt of the death of his father, the old Count De Theux. On his arrival in St. Ferdinand in August 1825, he took up the duties as Professor of Dogmatic Theology.<sup>8</sup>

Father Van Quickenborne began to realize that a visit of the Maryland Superior to the House of Studies at St. Ferdinand would quickly solve many of the difficulties in his way. An invitation with the closing words: "your Reverence does not know Missouri," brought the desired visit. Father Dzierozynski reached St. Ferdinand on July 18, 1827. Affable and kind as he was, he entered into the far-reaching plans of Father Van Quickenborne with a lively interest. No doubt a number of important questions in regard to a school of higher education in St. Louis, were discussed between the two representatives of the Order. Certainly, there was a better understanding shown after this visit by the Maryland authorities, of the needs of the Missouri Mission.

On January 29, 1826 Smedts and Verhaegen had been ordained at St. Mary's of the Barrens, by Bishop Rosati. And on September 23, 1827, at Florissant, the four remaining Jesuit scholastics, John Felix Livinus Verreidt, Jodocus Francis Van Assche, Peter John De Smet and John Anthony Elet were added to the ranks of the priesthood by the Bishop of St. Louis. Father Van Quickenborne was now greatly relieved of care and work. Yet, there were many difficulties confronting him. The farm called for a number of necessary improvements to put it on a paying basis. And the Indian School at St. Ferdinand, opened on May 11, 1824, according to the Concordat, was becoming a serious problem owing to the Government's broken faith. But the spiritual interests of his community were uppermost in the mind of the Superior. After the Christmas holidays the eight Jesuits entered upon what is called the Tertianship, under the direction of Father Van Quickenborne. "On the 9th of last January" wrote Father De Theux to his widowed mother, "I began with my six pupils the third year of probation." After the close of the retreat, February 7, 1828, the Fathers were assigned to various duties: John Elet to the Salt River District in Northeastern Missouri, Verhaegen to St. Charles and Smedt to Portage des Sioux; De Theux was assigned to parochial duties at Florissant; De Smet gave a Retreat to the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and Van Assche to the lay-brothers at the Jesuit Home; the Superior undertook a second missionary journey to the Osage Indians.

<sup>8</sup> Father De Smet incorporated a sketch of Father De Theux in his book, "Western Missions and Missionaries," pp. 474-486. Also of Elet and Smedts.

## THE FIRST INDIAN SCHOOL IN MISSOURI

It was mainly for the purpose of establishing Indian Missions in his vast diocese of Louisana, that Bishop Du Bourg had been so insistent on getting a colony of Jesuits. "Pending the ordination of our Jesuit novices and their going forth as apostles," the Bishop wrote from Georgetown to his brother Louis, March 17, 1823, "I propose to receive into the Seminary a half dozen Indian children from different tribes, so as to begin to familiarize my young missionaries with their manners and languages and in turn to prepare the children to become guides, interpreters and helpers to the missionaries, when the time comes to send the latter forth to the scattered tribes."<sup>1</sup>

Father Van Quickenborne was heart and soul in the work: The authorities in Maryland however counselled a prudent restraint, until the necessary means of success were assured.

"On the subject of the education of the young Indians of whom you speak," wrote Father Benedict Fenwick, "the Superior requires that you act with the utmost prudence and circumspection in that affair and that you keep yourself altogether within the Concordat. He wishes you to undertake no more than what is specified therein and what the Society has engaged itself to perform. He has no wish to enlarge the sphere of your operations until adequate means be procured, either from Government favoring such a design, or from the quarters of which he will give you due notice.

"The Superior would have you cultivate in a particular manner the good esteem of the Governor, and United States Agents, civil as well, as military, and whenever they speak to you of the education of the Indian youth to assure them of your willingness to undertake the same; but at the same time to let them know that such a thing will be quite impracticable without the aid of Government.... In the meantime let the engagement, as far as it goes, which the Society has entered into, be fully and completely executed. No one can blame you for not doing, what the Society has never engaged to do. You have, I presume, a copy of that contract. Let that be your polestar."<sup>2</sup>

The Government's promise of a subsidy, however, depended on the previous establishment of the School. Nothing remained to Father Van Quickenborne, but to proceed with the matter in the hope that

<sup>1</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. I, 5, p. 37; Records, vol. XIV, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Fenwick to Quickenborne, September 10, 1823, printed in Garraghan, "St. Regis Seminary" in "Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, p. 458.

Government would eventually meet its obligations. General William Clark, the Indian Superintendent, offered to place six boys of the Iowa tribe in the School. Two others of the Sauk Indians had already been promised. Father Van Quickenborne accepted them on the understood condition that the Government pay for their board and tuition. On June 11th, 1824, the pupils, in company with their parents, and Gabriel Vasquez, U. S. Agent for the Iowas, appeared at the Seminary. The institution was dedicated to St. Francis Regis.

"The Indian youths" Father Van Quickenborne tells us, "did not submit without a protest to what must have seemed to them, accustomed as they were to the freedom of the forest, as nothing short of imprisonment. They began to cry piteously as their parents prepared to depart, whereupon one of the scholastics took up a flute and began to play. The music had the effect of quieting the lads and making them resigned, as far as outward indications went, to their new environment. But Vasquez, the agent, warned Father Van Quickenborne that a sharp eye would have to be kept on the boys, as flight was an easy trick for them. Accordingly, Mr. Smedts, the Prefect, rose at intervals during the first night of the Iowa's stay at the Seminary to see that his young charges were all within bounds, while another scholastic was also assigned to sentry duty. But somehow or other the watchers were outwitted. About one o'clock in the morning the Iowa made a clever escape. Their flight was soon detected, and immediately a party of two were on the track of the fugitives. These were nimble runners, for they were five miles from the Seminary, when their pursurers came up to them. They made no resistance to capture and returned, apparently quite content, though determined, no doubt, to repeat the adventure when opportunity offered, as Father Van Quickenborne intimates in his account of the incident."<sup>3</sup>

The Indian school now being a reality, it devolved upon the Government to extend its friendly supporting hand.

"The Seminary," Father Van Quickenborne wrote to Clark, "went into actual operation the eleventh of May ultimo with two boys of the (Sauk) nation; on the eleventh of June three more were received of the (Iowa) nation; thus since that time I have had five boys. The buildings are commodious and can contain from forty to sixty students. They are nearly complete and fifty-four feet long by seventeen wide one way and thirty-four feet by seventeen feet the other way; three stories high, the lowest of stone, the two others of logs, brick chimneys and galleries all around. They have cost \$1500 and when completed will cost \$2000."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Van Quickenborne to Dziorizynski, June 12, 1824. "Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, p. 460.

<sup>4</sup> Quickenborne to Clark in "Records of Indian Office," "Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, p. 461.

To Secretary Calhoun Van Quickenborne wrote: "The Seminary is built on a spot of land remarkable for its healthiness and which, on account of its being somewhat distant from the Indian tribes and its being sufficiently removed from town, is possessed of many advantages.... I have persons belonging to the Seminary well calculated to teach the boys the mechanical arts such as are suitable for their condition, as a carpenter, a blacksmith, etc., whose names I do not place on the report, because the boys are not thoroughly fit as yet to begin to learn a trade. I have the comfort to be able to give my entire approbation to their correct comportment and, from the sentiments they utter, I have strong hopes that they will become virtuous and industrious citizens warmly attached to the Government that has over them such beneficent designs. I have been prepared these six months past to receive a considerable number more than what I have at present. The number of boys would have amounted to a few more, had not some on account of sickness returned to their village, after having gone a part of the way."<sup>5</sup>

These letters were written on November 21, 1824: In January of the following year the answer came from the Bureau of Indian Affairs which had just been established at Washington, to the effect, that the Government could not pay more than one hundred dollars for each pupil, and as the School had but five Indian children, five hundred dollars was the amount apportioned to St. Regis Seminary. A remittance of five hundred dollars was accordingly made. There was no "breach of promise" here, as had been charged by Bishop Du Bourg; yet the amount was not in proportion to the importance and difficulty of the work undertaken by the Jesuits, at the request of that prelate. One point in the matter is memorable, as Father Garraghan states:

"The five hundred dollars which Calhoun directed to be paid to Father Van Quickenborne at St. Louis was the first money ever appropriated by the United States Government to a Catholic Indian School. As the number of boys at the St. Regis had increased beyond eight, the appropriation in its favor for the years 1825 and 1826 was \$800. In 1827, however, the appropriation was cut down to \$400, extra demands on the funds of the Indian Office, so it was alleged, making a larger allowance impossible, and it remained at this figure until 1830, when the payments ceased altogether. The total amount of money paid by the Government to the Florissant School during its brief career of six or seven years was about \$3100. The cost of maintenance had been a little in excess of \$10,000."<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Quickenborne to Calhoun in "Records of Indian Office," "Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, p. 461.

<sup>6</sup> Garraghan, "St. Regis Seminary," "Catholic Historical Review," IV, pp. 463 and 464.

But the Government had promised Bishop Du Bourg to contribute towards the erection of buildings for the purpose of Indian education. This the Indian Bureau declined to do on the ground that "the building was not within the limits of those Indian nations, that border on our settlements."<sup>7</sup>

Not discouraged by these evasions of a plain duty, Father Van Quickenborne enlarged the usefulness of his school for Indian boys by prevailing on Mother Duchesne to undertake the foundation of a similar school for girls. Mother Duchesne asked the saintly Mother Barat for her consent to this apostolic work, which was gladly given.

"The board costs little," she explained to her; "lodging is already available and as for clothes, we shall beg them. We must omit nothing to further this interesting work, the object of so many desires, the very thing that has brought us here." Five weeks later, she wrote again: "I sometimes think that God has spoiled our first plans and our first undertaking, the boarding-school, I mean, in order to build up, little by little, the more fascinating work of the education of the savages. We must merit it by humiliations and other sufferings."<sup>8</sup>

Mother Duchesne's holy ambition was quickly realized:

"One evening during Office," Madam Mathevon records in her Journal, "Father Rector called at the convent and asked to see the Superior. Picture the surprise of Madam Duchesne on seeing two little Indian girls before her, who, greatly embarrassed, were trying to hide themselves behind the Father's flowing mantle. He had brought them up in a cart."<sup>9</sup> Thus the Sisters of the Sacred Heart had another great care added to their former ones. Father Van Quickenborne gave aid whenever he could, corn and potatoes and firewood for a whole year. But should not the Government lend its aid to this new educational institution? Similar institutions of Protesant denominations were drawing regular allowances: why not the Catholic Sisterhood engaged in work for the wards of the Government? They were ready and anxious to take forty or fifty Indian girls under their care. The underlying idea of Father Van Quickenborne is thus expressed in his letter to the Secretary of War: "Should Congress adopt the plan, suggested by the late President of the United States and adhered to by the present President in his inaugural speech, the two establishments in this place would be able in a very short time to give a solid beginning to the adopted plan, by placing with the consent of Parents, those of the boys who would wish to marry girls educated in the female establishment, in a given district, with some assistance for husbandry, in which case I would offer to send

7 McKenney to Quickenborne, April 28, 1825, l. c., 464.

8 Baunard-Fullerton, "Mother Du Chesne," p. 264.

9 Baunard-Fullerton, *ibidem*.

two of our Rev. Gentlemen to reside among them. These giving to their already known flock, filled with confidence in their Fathers, the aid which the Catholic religion affords, would be well calculated to maintain in them the spirit which they would have imbibed in the Seminaries, a spirit of the fear of the Lord, a spirit of regularity, industry and subordination, a sincere attachment from principle and religion to our most beneficent Government in their behalf. And in case several districts should be formed, from each of them a small and selected number might be sent to the establishment here, to be instructed more fully and fitted out for the important stations they might be called by the nation to fill.”<sup>10</sup>

Government aid failing him, at least, in the measure anticipated: Father Van Quickenborne addressed himself to the Catholics of Europe:

“At Mackinac last summer the Presbyterians put up a school-house about a hundred feet in length. In this school they have received a large number of Indian children, whom they feed, clothe and instruct gratis. The Catholics of America are in general poor and unable to build churches for their own needs. . . It is then to the generosity of the Catholics of Europe that we must look for effective aid. The ministers of error are quick to profit by the ample means placed at their disposal by their rich merchants, who subscribe liberally for all their institutions. Moreover, as they were on the ground before us, they make off annually with nearly all of the ten thousand dollars which the President of the United States is authorized to spend on the civilization of the Indians. There is so far only one Catholic school for the instruction of Indian children, that namely at Florissant, near St. Louis; this establishment receives a subsidy from the Government and this owing to the clever tact and engaging address of the Bishop of New Orleans, Mgr. Du Bourg. . . The Jesuits of France, England and Italy should come here and take possession of their old missions, the ruins of which cry out for them on all sides. . . What would I not do to make my voice heard all over Europe! I would speak to it of the poor Indians in these terms: “*Parvuli petierunt panem et non erat qui frangeret eis.*” (the little ones ask for bread and there was no one to break it unto them.)”<sup>11</sup>

The scholastic M. Smedts, the first prefect, was succeeded by M. Verreidt, who gives us a good account of the progress of his pupils, and the cares incumbent upon himself:

“The boys rise in the morning during our meditation and I am with them till half-past eight o’clock when they go to the field and return

<sup>10</sup> Van Quickenborne to Barbour, June 15, 1825, in “Records of the Indian Office,” communicated by Father Garraghan.

<sup>11</sup> *Annales*, vol. III, p. 333.

a quarter before twelve, at which time I am with them till two o'clock (after dinner) when they go again to the field till a quarter before five. At this time I used to teach some to spell till half-past six; but since eight boys have left us so that we have at present but seven Indian and three French boys, our Reverend Superior has allowed me to employ this time in the study of moral divinity, the study of which I resumed since last Easter. On Sundays and Holydays I have to be with them the whole day; whenever it rains I have to be with them. They must be watched at night. I often sleep in the day in order to watch at night."<sup>12</sup>

The greatest difficulty the instructors had with the Indian boys, was in teaching them the necessity and nobility of manual labor. This part of the teaching had to be done by example, words alone made no impression. "They work two hours before dinner and two after dinner with the greatest satisfaction. They all wept when the hoe was put into their hands for the first time."<sup>13</sup>

The approval of the Indian Bureau was not wanting. The school however, was not in the place desired by the Government, and so nothing substantial could be done for its expansion. The letter of the law was mightier than its spirit. Father Quickenborne at length grew weary of the unequal contest.

With a view of locating nigher to the Indian villages," he wrote to Secretary of War, Eaton, "I have ceased to admit pupils in the Indian school of this place. I am convinced that the youth of the Aborigines stand in need of as much, perhaps more, assistance after they have left the school than when they actually enjoy its advantages. I hope to be able, perhaps in the course of another year, to afford that assistance according to the plan I have had the honor to lay before your Excellency and of which I have obtained the verbal approbation of our venerable President (Jackson) a few months ago. I conducted home four sons of the principal chief of the Osages, who had received their education at our establishment. Whilst in their villages I proposed the subject of the plan in full council with the approbation of the agent and the previous leave of the President. They have unanimously expressed a most ardent wish to see it put into execution. I will deem it a great favor if the allowance hitherto given to the school of this place could be applied to the new establishment as soon as it will go into operation."<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Verreidt to Dziorizynski, 1826, "Records of Indian Office," "Catholic Historical Review," IV, p. 472.

<sup>13</sup> For particulars cf. Garraghan, *op. cit.*, 473.

<sup>14</sup> Van Quickenborne to Eaton, December 30, 1830, in "Records of Indian Office."

With this letter the business relations of St. Regis Seminary with the Government ceased: The Indian School closed its doors; lack of financial support being the chief cause of its decline. Yet it had produced a great deal of good. Some of the Indian pupils, later on, became the chief supporters of the missionary enterprises of their Jesuit teachers. The really great work of the Jesuit Fathers in Missouri was just beginning to take form. But high praise is due to the pathfinder and pioneer laborer Father Felix Van Quickenborne.

## CHAPTER 15

### THE FIRST INDIAN MISSIONARY EFFORTS OF THE JESUITS

The Concordat entered into by Bishop Du Bourg and the Superior of the Maryland Jesuits defined, in a sufficiently precise form, the scope, purpose and methods of the new enterprise centered at St. Ferdinand's. The spiritual jurisdiction of the Jesuit organization extended over the northwest part of the diocese, the Indians were to be their special care, but all the settlements of Europeans fell under their jurisdiction likewise. A number of missionaries were to be provided for the Indians within two years. The Bishop, on his part, agreed to give to the Society his farm at Florissant, and also to extend moral and financial support to the institution. The agreement was approved by the General of the Society of Jesus, Father Aloysius Fortis; but the Holy See never took action on the matter. Yet, in the eyes of Bishops Du Bourg and Rosati, as well as in the Jesuit Superior's estimation, the Concordat was considered binding on both sides. The Jesuits built their House and opened their Indian school and attended the various parishes and stations on and beyond the Missouri River, whilst Bishop Du Bourg sent Father Van Quickenborne the title-deeds for the Florissant farm. A brief delay in this was caused by the fact that John Mullanphy held a mortgage of \$2000.00 on the property, which the Bishop was unable to cancel, until in 1824, a timely contribution from the Association of the Propagation of the Faith saved the situation. The deed was executed in New Orleans on May 25, 1825. The most important stipulations of the Concordat were thus fulfilled, whilst others in their very nature, awaited fulfilment. There was only one clause that caused friction between the Bishop and the Jesuits: the stipulation in regard to the Indian Mission. According to Article V the Jesuits had engaged, "that at the expiration of two years, counting from the time of their arrival at least, four or five missionaries duly qualified, shall proceed to the remote missions, that is, to the Indian settlements in the vicinity of Council Bluffs, and shall there labor towards the attainment of the great object specified above, for the greater glory of God."

The two years had now elapsed and only casual visits had been made to some of the less remote tribes, none whatever to the Indians at Council Bluffs or at Prairie du Chien. Bishop Du Bourg became insistent that a beginning be made. General William Clarke, the Indian Superintendent, also urged the necessity of applying to the

Government for some of the Indian Stations. Father Van Quickenborne acknowledged that both were right, but pleaded for time, until the work could be undertaken with some hope of success. In the meantime he drew up, at General Clarke's solicitation, the following plan for the civilization of the Indians.

1. Our little Indian Seminary should continue to support the present number of boys from eight to twelve years of age, while the Ladies of the Sacred Heart in our neighborhood should bring up about as many girls of the same tribe. They should be taken young, from eight to twelve, to habituate them more easily to the customs and industry of civil life, and impress more deeply on their hearts the principles of religion.

2. After five or six years' education, it would be good that each youth should choose a wife among the pupils of the Sacred Heart, before returning to his tribe.

3. Within two or three years two missionaries should go to reside in that nation to gain their confidence and esteem, and gradually persuade a number to settle together on a tract to be set apart by Government. Agricultural implements and other necessary tools for the new establishment to be furnished.<sup>1</sup>

4. As soon as this new town was formed, some of the couples formed in our establishment should be sent there with one of the said missionaries, who should be immediately replaced, so that two should always be left with the body of the tribe till it was gradually absorbed in the civilized colony.

5. Our missionaries should then pass to another tribe and proceed successively with each in the same manner as the first.

6. As the number of missionaries and our resources increase, the civilization of two or more tribes might be undertaken at once.

The expense of carrying out this plan might be estimated thus :

Support of 16 to 24 children in the two establishments. . . \$1900.

Three missionaries ..... 600.

---

Total.....\$2500.<sup>2</sup>

Father Van Quickenborne's plan was never carried out, in a manner it deserved to be. Two years later the indefatigable friend of the Indians, proposed it to President Jackson, and received a verbal approval: yet, as larger schemes were then agitating the General's mind, the Van Quickenborne plan was dropped. Hoping against hope, the good Father wrote to the Father General in Rome for a formal ap-

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Concordat, Part I, Book III, Chapter 12, of this History.  
<sup>2</sup> Indian Office Papers, cf. Shea, "History of Indian Missions," p. 406.

proval. "Follow, as far as possible," came the answer, "the methods employed of old by our Fathers in Paraguay; for these have been tried and found successful."<sup>3</sup>

Father Van Quickenborne made use of the first opportunity given him by the ordination of his six scholastics in 1827, to pay a missionary visit to the Osage Indians beyond the boundary of Missouri. The Osage nation was once in possession of a large portion of Central Missouri, but being pushed back to the west by hostile tribes, they made a treaty with the United States in 1808, by which they ceded almost all their holdings in the State in exchange for new homes on the banks of the Neosho River in Arkansas. They were fine, stately fellows, physically, as Washington Irving describes them. Stern and simple in garb and aspect, with Roman countenances and deep chests, with bust and arms bare, they looked like so many bronze figures. In 1822 they had been visited by Father De La Croix in their old Missouri homes. Father Van Quickenborne found them in 1827, in what is now South-eastern Kansas. A full account of this journey to the Osage country is contained in two of his own letters, written whilst the events were still fresh in his memory. The first letter is addressed to Father Dzorizynski:

"I started, as your Reverence knows, on the octave of our Holy Father St. Ignatius, in company with Mr. Hamtranek, who has been always very kind and obliging to me. I traveled as a missionary, having with me my chapel. I had to take, moreover my tent, mosquito bar and blankets for my bed and some little presents which made my burden rather heavy. The distance is about 350 miles which we travelled in sixteen days. In those parts of the country, this is the way of travelling. At night the horses are let loose, hobbled however, and they must look out for themselves, for all the way from Jefferson City to the Neosho, there is no corn to be had. In the morning, the first thing is to catch the horses. Saddling and packing being done, the day's journey begins, and this always before sunrise. Betwixt ten and eleven o'clock the march stops, the horses are unsaddled, unpacked and permitted to feed. At this hour breakfast and dinner is taken. About three o'clock you start for your place of encampment, which is always taken about rivers or woods with springs; water has always been a-plenty. The bed consists of a skin which covers the ground, and two or three blankets. The whole is covered by a mosquito bar, and I can assure you that I slept as comfortable as I ever did on a bed of down. Until we reached the Neosho we had no river to swim. Harmony is a place on the Osage river. Here the Society of Presbyterians of Boston have a missionary

---

3 Woodstock Letters, 25, 354.

establishment called by them Harmony. It is about 120 miles from the city of Jefferson, and as many from Lexington on the Missouri. Four years ago the great village of the Osages was but eight miles from this establishment. Two or three years ago the Indian title to this land was extinguished, and now Harmony and the old site of the Osage village are within the limits of the State. In consequence of the sale of their lands, the Indians (Osages) have removed their village to the banks of the Neosho river 70 or 68 miles further in a south-west direction. Here (On the Neosho within 20 miles) the whole nation is gathered in four villages, one called the great village (to this Clairmont's band must join itself next spring) another called the village of the Little Osage. There are besides two small ones of little importance. The site of these villages is not likely to be changed."<sup>4</sup> "In fact the government, with a view of preventing any removal, has built there three houses, and very good and large houses too, for the three principal chiefs."<sup>5</sup>

Besides, the country was liked by the Osages on account of its natural beauty of forest, prairie and streams. Then, as the nation had only a strip of fifty mile width left to them, and was surrounded on all sides by other nations and the European settlements, they could not move, even if they should wish to do so.

As to their numerical strength, Father Van Quickenborne informs us that, "The Agent, Superintendent and Secretary of War think there are 20,000 Osages. Some think they are not so numerous. "The principal chiefs," continues the letter, "have invited me to their lodges, have been very kind towards me and have promised me their boys. They are, I believe, good Indians. You will have an opportunity to see them next winter at the college, if you choose. I would be glad of it."<sup>6</sup>

Regarding the halfbreeds, of whom there were a large number among the Osages the Father tells us that most of them had been baptized Catholics, either at St. Charles, Cote Sans Dessein or Florissant, and all of them had a strong aversion for the Protestant religion yet that all neglected the practice of their own. "The establishment at Harmony is governed as to the general concerns, by a board of commissioners. The Reverend gentlemen at Harmony are of the Presbyterian persuasion. They have an establishment at Harmony, a station on the Neosho and another at Union on the Arkansas River near Clair-

---

<sup>4</sup> Van Quickenborne to Dzierizynski, Oct. 21, 1827. Archives of Georgetown.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

mont's Band. Each received from Government \$600. The Superintendent at Harmony is called Dodge."<sup>7</sup>

With his consent all the children of the government school came to Father Quickenborne's improvised chapel.

"The church vestments which M. De La Croix had used there, had been given to the care of Mr. Dodge and were found in good order. They are nicer and richer than any we have at home. Instead of an altar-piece, I had a banner of fine silk elegantly embroidered and bearing a fine engraving of the Blessed Virgin. I can say that my altar was well fixed. Early in the morning the place was crowded with Indians. The first that came to confession was an Osage of twenty-one who knew a little of the French language. I was extremely pleased with his modest behavior. About the hour appointed for Mass I began to baptize those whom I had prepared. Mr. Dodge and Mrs Dodge with the Rev. Mr. Jones and Mr. Hasten with all their families came to mass, sermon and the ceremonies of Baptism. In their presence I baptized about one-third of their school, in all eighteen; but of those eighteen, several, perhaps six, were not of their school."<sup>8</sup> Mr. Dodge also desired to make an address to the children; but the missionary said it was against the rule of the church.

The next day Mr. Dodge invited him to visit his school and there he saw his little and big fellows whom he had baptized, with their medals and crosses on their necks.

Father Van Quickenborne expresses his sincere regard for these people of alien faith. "They appeared to me to be moral, industrious, peaceable and good-natured. They related to me how much they had to suffer in the beginning; what privations they had to undergo, how many days they had been without bread and corn; how many days they had to live in tents. When will the time come that we will have at least as much courage as these men? If Your Reverence cannot give me a Superior or a Companion, I am willing to go alone."<sup>9</sup>

From Harmony Mission Father Van Quickenborne traversed the country in a south-easterly direction to the Osage villages along the Neosho River. What further befell the missionary in the Osage country is told in a letter of his to Madam Xavier, one of the nuns of the Sacred Heart: "From Harmony I set out for the great village situated on the bank of the Neosho River, two days journey from Harmony. About a hundred Indians came out to meet the Agent, in whose company I was. We put up at Mr. Chouteau's place. On the feast of St. Louis, August 25, I had the happiness of saying the first mass ever said in this country.

---

7 Van Quickenborne to Dziorizynski, Oct. 21, 1827. Archives of Georgetown.

8 Idem, *ibidem*.

9 Idem, *ibidem*.

It was a Saturday and the following day I proclaimed a jubilee for the few Creoles living among the Osage. Three days after our arrival, I was invited to dinner by the chief of the great village, and two days later by the chief of a village of the Osage, twenty miles farther up the Neosho. I was delighted with the reception they gave me as well as with the dispositions they manifested. I remained with them ten weeks and baptized seventeen persons. The three principal chiefs have said that they would send their children to the Seminary and I am inclined to think that they will do so."<sup>10</sup>

Father Van Quickenborne's main object in making this excursion was to get boys for his Indian Seminary and to acquaint himself with Indian life: he came to the following conclusion: To christianize the barbarians you must first humanize them: that is to say, you must teach them to abandon their savage manner of living. The greatest obstacle to a genuine conversion are the plurality of wives and the barbarous custom of selling their daughters in marriage. In order to combat their vices successfully, the Indians must live under the eye of the missionary. The devoted Father offered to serve in the difficult mission, but not as Superior. With a quick and sure judgment, he proposed the youthful Father De Smet for this great opportunity. He, the old and tired man was willing to take his former novice as his Superior.

In the Spring of 1828 the zealous Superior made a second journey to the Osage Indians. "Visiting first the Harmony Mission on the Marais des Cygnes, where he renewed acquaintance with the Osage children he had baptized the preceding year he continued his journey thence to the Great Osage village on the Neosho. Here and in the other Indian villages in the vicinity he practiced his ministry, of preaching and administering the sacraments. He performed seventeen baptisms in the course of this second Osage excursion, but no record of them has survived. Many adult Indians were eager to be baptized; but of the number, he found only five or six worthy of the grace, the loose, savage ways of the average Osage adult being an effectual barrier to the practice of a Christian life. When Father Van Quickenborne set out on his return journey from the Neosho, he had in his company a little Osage "prince," who had been delivered to his charge with a display of Indian ceremony, to be educated in the Indian school at Florissant."<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Van Quickenborne to Madam Xavier.

<sup>11</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. IV, p. 572.

“In 1830 Father Van Quickenborne paid a third visit to the Osage. His route brought him first to the villages they had formed along the Mariton River in what is now Bourbon County, Kansas, not far from the present Fort Scott. From the Marmiton he turned to the southwest, visiting on his way all the Indian lodges on the Neosho as far as its junction with the Saline, about forty miles north of Fort Gibson and establishing missionary stations in the Osage settlements on Chouteau, Prior and Cabin Creeks. His zealous labors extended therefore, far within the limits of what is now Oklahoma and very probably represent the earliest exercise of the Catholic ministry in that part of the Union.”<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Garraghan, Gilbert J. “History of the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus,” in MS.

## THE ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY

The Catholic Church is in its very nature the world's great educational institution in spiritual matters. It is her divine commission to teach all nations and to teach them to observe all things that Christ taught her. But, as all truth is one, whether it be of the natural or the supernatural order, the Church has at all times endeavored to combine with her divine teaching of religion, the subsidiary instruction in the human sciences and arts. In other words, the Church has always sought to establish schools of learning in the shadow of her temples of faith. So it was in the diocese of St. Louis. As soon as religion had been established on a solid foundation by the first resident Bishop, a college was founded at the Cathedral. As early as January 8th, 1818, Bishop Du Bourg wrote: "The people are most anxious that I should erect a college."<sup>1</sup> The college was established and ran its course of usefulness, to be merged at last in the Jesuit College that was, under God's blessing, to grow into what we now hold so dear, the St. Louis University. "They, (the Jesuits) will take the College of St. Louis," wrote Bishop Du Bourg from Bordeaux, on June 24th, 1824, "in this way they will insure its stability."<sup>2</sup> The Jesuits themselves had, during their early days at St. Ferdinand, devoted most of their time and energy to educational purposes: the Novitiate was a school of divinity; St. Regis Seminary was a primary school for boys. Out of these educational ventures grew the true *universitas literarum*, a school that united in its teaching every branch of knowledge necessary for a liberal education. St. Louis University had to pass through a long course of heroic endeavor and sacrifice to attain its high position among the educational institutions of the country. It was the pioneer of higher education in the Mississippi Valley, and sustained all the vicissitudes of pioneering.

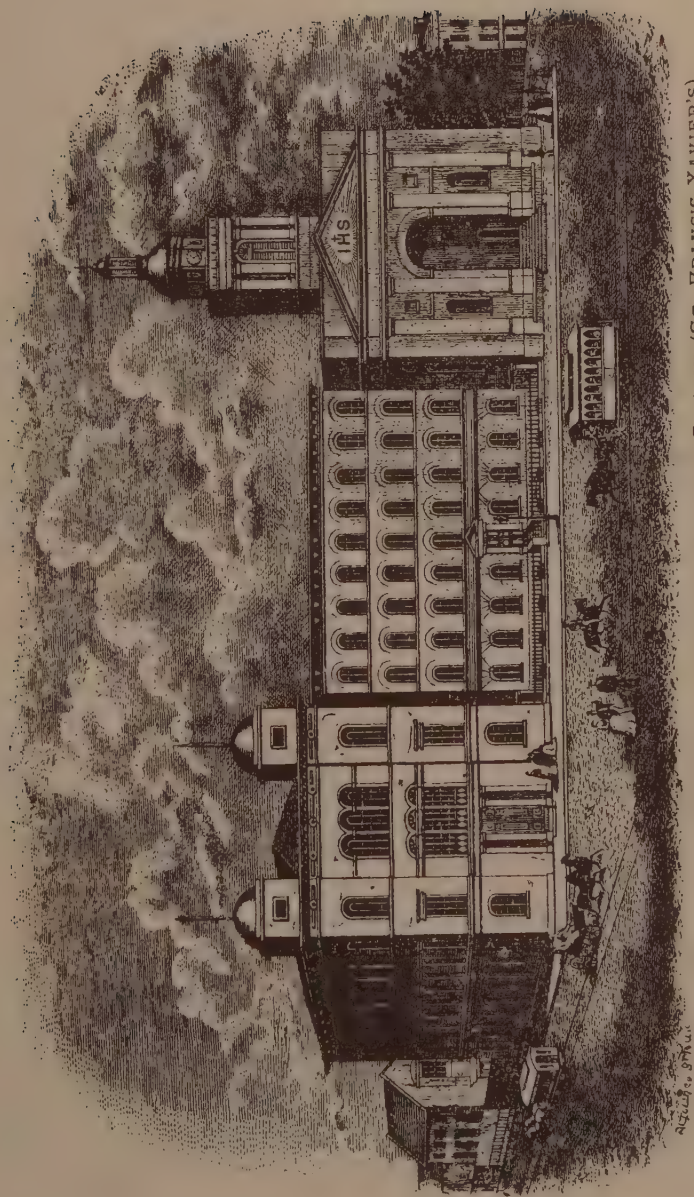
The connection between the old and the new College of St. Louis is indicated in Bishop Du Bourg's letter to Father Francis Neale, the Maryland Superior of the Jesuits, dated November 27, 1823:

"I would feel disposed to give your Society two beautiful squares of ground in the City of St. Louis and to help in the erection of a house for an academy as a preparation for a college, if you thought you could spare a couple of your Maryland brethren, even scholastics, to com-

---

1 "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. II, p. 339.

2 Annales, vol. I, p. 474.



THE OLD COLLEGE CHURCH (ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S).



mence the establishment; in which case I will shut up the one that is now kept by some of my priests on the Bishop's premises."<sup>3</sup>

In a subsequent letter to Father Van Quickenborne the prelate once more offered to close his own college, in case the Jesuits should open an institution in St. Louis. Father Van Quickenborne, in communicating this offer to his Superior, mentions the difficulties in the way of such a foundation: Yet, he observes: "The City of St. Louis is the principal one of the state, and near other rising towns in Illinois. If our men were there, many day-scholars would attend school; of these, some would enter the Society, especially if, according to the Institute, we teach gratis."<sup>4</sup>

Father Charles Nerinckx, on his visit to Florissant, was also consulted on the matter, and commissioned to submit Father Quickenborne's ideas to Bishop Rosati at the Barrens. Bishop Du Bourg answered from New Orleans: "First in importance among these matters is your establishment in St. Louis. To forward it and give it all desirable stability and independence, I offer you two fine squares in Connor's addition to the city on the same conditions on which they were given to me, to wit, that a college should be built upon one of them (it does not matter which) and that it should be in operation within seven years of the date of the bond of conveyance, which was made over to me in the year 1819 or 1820. There still remains sufficient time to put up a small house, either of log or frame; for, as the dimensions and material of the building were not specified in the bond, any kind of structure suited to receive some thirty day-scholars, or even fewer, will meet the requirements. I foresee two difficulties in the way of your acceptance; 1st. the expense and 2nd your rules. As to the first, I am persuaded that you will receive aid from the inhabitants, if you make the rounds of the city for such purpose. I will myself contribute one hundred dollars. As to the rules of your Society or the difficulty of your taking in charge the direction of the school, there is nothing to prevent you, while these hindrances last, from putting the school in the hands of some master, to whom you can lease it or even lend it gratis. I regard this property as too precious a thing, in view of the future interests of religion and of your Society, not to urge you to make every effort to assure yourself of its possession; moreover, as the time is approaching after which regrets will be useless, I am persuaded that you can go far in this matter on your own responsibility, with the understanding that, in view of the urgency of the case, you cannot fail to obtain subsequently the approval of your Superior."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Du Bourg to Francis Neale, S. J., Nov. 27, 1823.

<sup>4</sup> Van Quickenborne to Dziorizynski, Jan. 1, 1824.

<sup>5</sup> Du Bourg to Van Quickenborne, Nov. 9, 1825.

Father Van Quickenborne was anxious to undertake the great work: yet he advised the Bishop to propose the matter to the Maryland Superior, adding this characteristic sentiment: "It will require a miracle to give us a college at St. Louis, such as our Institute demands, namely, one which is free for day-pupils, and which for that reason must have an adequate revenue. Still I dare to hope it of the Divine goodness."<sup>6</sup>

/// The two squares offered by the Bishop to Father Van Quickenborne were the gift of Jeremiah Connor, who had laid out Washington Avenue through his land. He was always open handed, where the cause of the Church was concerned. It was he who had made the generous contribution to the fund collected for the purpose of putting Church and presbytere in order for the proper reception of Bishop Du Bourg in 1818. But Connor's loyal intention came very near to being nullified after his premature death. His estate was sold under the sheriff's hammer, and bought in by Col. John O'Fallon. ///

The new owner of the College lot sold it to Jesse Lindell for \$210.00. But Father Van Quickenborne recovered it for its original purpose by an exchange sale. The lot had a frontage of 270 feet on Washington Avenue, between Ninth and Tenth Streets.

Greatly elated by his success, Father Van Quickenborne wrote to Father Dzioryzinski: "I got the College lot. The agreement is written and signed by both parties, Mr. Lindell and myself. I pay nothing, but give the same quantity of land to Mr. Lindell, and that quantity I take from lots belonging to Bishop Du Bourg, but placed at my disposal."<sup>7</sup> In the summer of 1828, towards the end of the Third Year of Probation, Father Van Quickenborne wrote out for his Superior the mighty reasons, why the St. Louis College plan should be carried out at once. The deeds for the College lots had been accepted, which implied the duty of opening a school: The time was now favorable: a further delay might keep the Jesuits out forever; the future progress of the Order depended on the establishment of a College in a populous city like St. Louis: many complaints were made by the inhabitants of St. Louis about not having a single Catholic school.

"Your Reverence sees that we must now go on," Father Van Quickenborne concludes his long letter, "I have a beautiful square, 270 ft. by 225 ft. belonging to me, of which I shall send the deed to your Reverence. The Bishop must and does approve it; I have no doubt but a fine church will be built also for us in process of time. Mr. Saulnier, Dusaussais, Loisel, priests at St. Louis, also approve it. The people demand it and are willing to subscribe for the building. They highly

---

<sup>6</sup> Van Quickenborne to Du Bourg, *Annales*, 1827.

<sup>7</sup> Van Quickenborne to Dzioryzinski, Feb. 12, 1826.

cry for a church where sermons in English are preached. The French want the present church for themselves. The Bishop is willing, i. e. has given me his word that, not only is he pleased that we should have a church, but also a parochial school for the Americans. The Bishop has waited now for two years. If we do not do it, the people will expect it from him and he should and would do it. St. Louis (that is, an establishment there) is necessary for our Indian mission. 1) there we can easily and with all possible advantage see and treat with the chiefs of every nation. 2) There we can easily know every event of importance concerning affairs connected with the Indian mission. 3) There reside the Superintendent of Indian Affairs and all the agents and traders whose good will we must cultivate. 4) There we must transact almost all our affairs to begin, continue and support our establishment in the Indian country. 5) By opening a free school we oblige those very men whose assistance we want, and gain a good share of popularity. 6) St. Louis' fate is decided as to its becoming a large and very important city in the West. From this place we may expect a succession, (of novices) as the classical education of a child will not be expensive to the parent, and as there are many families truly pious who would be glad to see their children embracing a religious life. 7) The choice of a proper place for our establishment is of the highest importance. About St. Louis being the proper place there can be no doubt, and the time of making the choice is now and precisely and only now.

“As to the means of supporting Ours,<sup>8</sup> let me, Rev. Superior, bring to your recollection the poor estate in which we came out. Great improvements we are making on our farm in conformity with your Reverence's instructions and, when they will be finished, I will give an accurate account of them. We have a fine new church in St. Charles, a fine house, the whole worth \$10,000, and burdened with no debts. Ours in St. Louis will be supported in the following way: From our farm, which will be fully competent to support eight persons in St. Louis and twelve novices in Florissant; moreover, forty Indian boys; for their support we have received and will receive from the charity of the faithful whatever is necessary. Having a negro family there, the produce of the farm will sell much higher, as we would be enabled to attend market to our advantage. Our farm has given now a surplus of \$1000 yearly, and we hope that it will continue to do so and that the Almighty will not diminish His liberality. We have now a very fine and large crop of corn, wheat and potatoes.

“Twelve boarders could be and, I dare say, almost should be kept, paying for board and tuition \$100. This would put us on the advance

---

<sup>8</sup> “Ours” is a Jesuit expression for our members.

and help towards paying for the future church. This once built, the pew-rent would give from four to five hundred dollars a year. The intentions of masses and alms which we get now regularly from St. Louis and which amount to \$120 a year would surely not be diminished.

“At present two Fathers would do at St. Louis to begin, and two would remain for the Indian mission. I would place at St. Louis Father Verhaegen, Elet and De Smet with Rev. Father De Theux, whom, however, I would not fix at St. Louis; in my absence among the Indians, he should be at Florissant. At any rate I would not fix more than two fathers at the college so as to have one or two to spare for emergencies. Some offer themselves for lay-brothers who seem to be pretty well calculated to teach after their noviceship, spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, and in that case we would gain a Father. The main point will be to have one who would give a reputation to the college, would maintain strict religious discipline among Ours, and have things in the school go on with great regularity.

“Of the two, Father De Theux and Verhaegen, I would give the preference to Father Verhaegen. For my part, if I cannot go to the Indians, I would be very willing and satisfied to teach, for the remainder of my days, a grammar class.”<sup>9</sup> Father Dzorizynski gave his approval, and Father Van Quickenborne now publicly announced his intention of opening a College at St. Louis:

“In response to your solicitations as well as those of Msgr. Du Bourg, we have decided to do the same thing here, namely, to open, as soon as possible, a college, in which, day-scholars will be taught free of charge. I have made an exchange for the College lot, donated by Mr. Connor and it is there I propose to erect a building such as the subscriptions will allow. By order of Our Superior the Third Year of of Probation came to an end on the feast of St. Ignatius, so that now we are entirely free.”<sup>10</sup>

Building operations were begun in November 1828: and subscriptions rapidly assumed the splendid proportion of half the cost of the edifice. Father De Smet added \$3000. to the fund, and Father Van Quickenborne himself offered to contribute his patrimony, estimated at \$2000. Bishop Du Bourg's good will was assured. Bishop Rosati was delighted.

An attempt, however, of Senator Thomas H. Benton to obtain from Congress an allowance of a whole township of land for the endowment of the College, was bound to fail, though the movement did no harm.

---

<sup>9</sup> Van Quickenborne to Dzorizynski, Fall of 1828.

<sup>10</sup> Van Quickenborne to Rosati, Sept. 1, 1828.

The school was opened on November 2nd, 1829, with an enrollment of ten boarders and thirty externs, which quickly increased to a total of one hundred and fifty pupils. Father Peter Verhaegen was appointed Acting President, as representative of Father Van Quickenborne, until the Maryland Superior should have made a permanent assignment. Father Elet was made Procurator; Father Peter Walsh, S. J. a recent accession, Prefect of Studies; Father De Theux, as Minister, took charge of the domestic affairs.

This staff of four professors did not appear sufficient to man a College: in fact, for the first and second year the institution was but a grammar school. Within two years, however, the study of Latin and Greek was introduced. In consequence the staff also had to be increased. In October 1837, Father John Van Lommel and M. Jodocus Van Sweevelt arrived from Georgetown, to be followed by Father James Oliver Van de Velde. Father Van Lommel was soon assigned to missionary work.

On December 28th, 1832, the St. Louis College was raised to the dignity and style of the "St. Louis University;" under a charter granted by the State Legislature, by which it was enabled to combine with its literary and scientific department the faculties of theology, law and medicine, as it did in later years.<sup>11</sup>

The Asiatic cholera, that visited St. Louis in 1832 and again in 1833, did not claim a single victim in the College, though the mortality in the city was very high.

In 1832, Father Van de Velde made a trip through the South in the interest of the College. The foundation of another Jesuit College in Louisiana began to be mooted in 1831. Yet, new buildings were required in St. Louis. Father Verhaegen humorously describes the difficulties of building operations in Missouri. "Our new wing is now ready to receive the roof. Our workmen in Missouri are mighty slow. They always promise; they never refuse: but without any ceremony on their part, they let us wait. We have now come to the resolution of stopping improving our place till we get out of debt. Hence, when I will have erected, constructed, raised, put up and completed, a smokehouse, the expense of which may not reach \$150. I must consign all my other plans to the darkness of one of the drawers of my desk, there to lie, till they shall be called into action again. When the happy time shall have arrived, I will begin to crow as loud as I ever did."<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Hill, "Historical Sketches of St. Louis University."

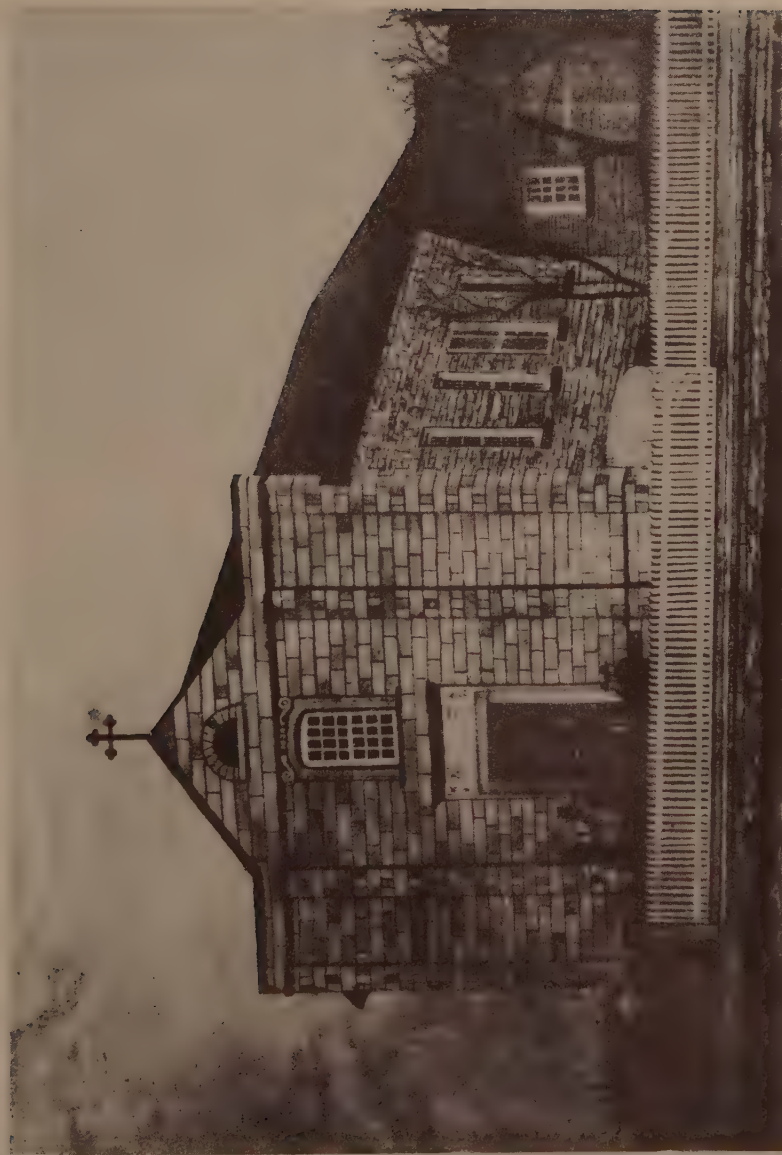
<sup>12</sup> Verhaegen to McSherry, Oct. 16, 1823.

And again on May 14, 1836, Father Verhaegen writes to Father McSherry at Georgetown: "You are not unacquainted with the severe trials we experienced here, and certain it is that they have been the means used by Providence to crown our labors with a success which five years ago we did not anticipate . . . . Father Elet started for Louisiana on the 14th of this month. He will spend the winter in the South and try to collect what is due the institution. Times are hard at St. Louis, and money is scarce . . . . Before next April we shall have our full number, 150 boarders. This is the *ne plus ultra*. Our buildings cannot accommodate more. Thank God I have at present very able and edifying secular professors—They assist at Mass with the students every day and they regularly frequent the sacraments."<sup>13</sup>

The Jesuit College, now the St. Louis University, was an accomplished fact.

---

<sup>13</sup> Verhaegen to McSherry. For further data on the Beginnings of the St. Louis University, cf. Garraghan, G. J. in "St. Louis Historical Review," vol. I, pp. 85-103.



FATHER DAIMEN'S CHURCH AT STE. GENEVIEVE  
Built in 1831—Consecrated by Bishop Rosati, October 13, 1837



## STE. GENEVIEVE UNDER FATHERS PRATTE AND DAHMEN

The oldest town on the Missouri side of the river, having a corporate existence at the time of Bishop Rosati's appointment, was Ste. Genevieve. The church there was a Jesuit foundation dating back to the palmy days of Kaskaskia. The succession of pastors or missionary priests had been: the Jesuit Fathers: Philibert Watrin, John B. Salleneuve, J. Morinie, from 1760-1768, Father Pierre Gibault, 1768-1773: the Capuchin Father Hilaire, from 1773-1777; the Jesuit Sebastian Meurin and Father Gibault, 1778-1784: the Capuchin Louis Guignes, from 1786-1789: the Carmelite Paul de St. Pierre, from 1789-1796: then Father James Maxwell, from 1796-1814, and the pastor of Prairie du Rocher, Father Donatien Olivier, from 1814-1816. The succession of pastors was carried down with but few and short intervals, a circumstance which in a large measure, accounts for the staunch Catholicity and good moral condition of the people in the town and its surrounding districts. It was Ste. Genevieve that gave to the Church the first native priest of Missouri, Father Henry Pratte. Born at Ste Genevieve, January 19, 1788, and baptized by Father Louis Guignes, on February 18th, young Henry attended the village school taught by Francis Moro. From childhood on he was noted for his gentle and pious disposition. In 1803 he was sent to the Sulpician Seminary, at Montreal, where he was ordained to the priesthood in 1815. In the previous year Father James Maxwell the pastor of Ste. Genevieve had been thrown from his horse and killed. On hearing this the newly ordained priest called on Bishop Flaget at Bardstown, then administrating the affairs of the Louisana diocese, and asked to be appointed pastor of his native town. Bishop Flaget, being well acquainted with the people of Ste. Genevieve and having a high regard for the young priest's family, granted the request. Father Pratte entered upon his duties in October 1815. The parish of Ste. Genevieve included the dependencies: Old Mines, Cape Girardeau, Little Canada, St. Michaels, and of course the neighboring New Bourbon. The young curé's field of labor was very extensive, and laborious: but contrary to the proverb, "a prophet is not acceptable in his own country," Father Pratte was idolized by the people among whom he had spent his childhood. He took possession of the little house which had been bought by the people of the town in 1786 from Nicholas Roussin for a parochial residence, enlarged it, and his father came to live with him. The old log-church had been moved in 1794 by Father De Saint Pierre from the Old Village to the new location on the hills, and had inci-

dentally changed its name from St. Joachim to Ste. Genevieve. Father Pratte enlarged it by building a new sacristy, using the old one for a sanctuary, thus increasing the seating capacity, he put in a new floor, a new roof and plastered the building.

Ste. Genevieve owes to Father Pratte the renewal of its piety and the blessing of Christian education of the children; to teach the Catechism was his delight. The preparation of the First-Communicants was always a long and thorough course. But, the numerous stations where the miners and farmers might gather for divine worship often called him away from home. Bishop Rosati in his beautiful obituary of Father Pratte gives him credit for the foundation of two Churches, one at Old Mines in Washington County, and the other in St. Michael's near Fredericktown, in Madison County. Both were log structures. Old Mines is, as we have shown, the earliest place that sprung up at the headwaters of the Black River, tributary to the Meramec, in the days of Renault. It is very probable that the Jesuit Fathers from Kaskaskia visited the place at times, though they had no mission there.

The record of the church of Ste. Ann of Fort Chartres, in an entry under date of September 28th, 1748, shows that one Pierre Vivarenne, of Picardy, France, and his wife, Marianne Rondeau, were inhabitants of the Village of the Mine. This Vivarenne certainly came from France with Renault.

As early as 1793, the church records of Ste. Genevieve make mention of Old Mines and in 1803 the population consisted of thirty-two men, thirteen women, seventy-two children and eighteen slaves. The church records of Ste. Genevieve show that Father Maxwell frequently visited the Mine, but it was Father Pratte who built the first church of which records exist. These records begin April 20th, 1820, in his handwriting. The little church he built was of logs and was used until 1828, when Father John Bouillier, C. M., the first resident pastor, built the present brick church, which was begun in 1828 and blessed by Bishop Rosati October 9th, 1831.

These facts are derived from Ida M. Schaaf's article on Father Henry Pratte.<sup>1</sup>

A few more statements from the same authority on Ste. Genevieve will be acceptable.

The distance from Ste. Genevieve to Old Mines, being about sixty miles over steep, rocky hills was long and tiring. At a point about midway was a wonderful spring, and at this place travelers were wont to stop and rest and perhaps, spend the night in camp. A few men of Ste. Genevieve and Old Mines, some of them related by blood to Father

---

<sup>1</sup> Schaaf, Ida M., "Henri Pratte, Missouri's first native-born priest," "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. V, pp. 129-149. The letters of Father Pratte to Rosati are to be found in the Archives of the St. Louis Archdiocese.

Pratte, built a blacksmith shop there and later, a road house. Antonine Aubuchon built a home there in 1826.

Although the first church built at this little settlement, called Petit Canada, was in 1828, it is quite probable that Father Pratte offered the holy sacrifice of the Mass for these settlers many a time when passing along the way.

The village of St. Michaels in Madison County owes its origin to a number of French Creoles from New Bourbon and Ste. Genevieve, who in 1799, obtained a grant of 5200 arpents of land between the headwaters of the Saline and Castor Creeks. They built their log-houses in the valley, south of the Mine La Motte claim, near a ridge on which the city of Fredericktown was founded later on. But owing to an inundation they removed their village a little distance to the northeast. It was here on the road from Ste. Genevieve to Mine La Motte that Father Maxwell was wont to stay and minister to the Catholics of the neighborhood. But the people gradually drifted back to the old location, and in 1820 Father Pratte built for them the first Church of St. Michaels. It was constructed of walnut-logs and served the parish there as a place of worship until Father Cellini moved it to the higher location just on the edge of the newly founded village of Fredericktown. Mine La Motte one of the earliest settlements of the State is within the limits of the parish of Old St. Michaels.

In addition to looking after his own parish of Ste. Genevieve and establishing the two new parishes at Old Mines and St. Michaels, to which he was obliged to travel on horseback, his house was the half-way house between St. Louis and the Seminary at the Barrens, where he entertained all priests passing back and forth. Many and various were the services Father Pratte rendered to the Fathers of the Seminary at the Barrens.

As the Church Records of Ste. Genevieve, beginning October 22nd, 1817, to January 30th, 1818, are in the hand writing of Father De Andreis, it may be inferred that Father Pratte was in St. Louis the greater part of three months, superintending the repairs and preparing for the Bishop's reception. Then, at the end of the year 1817, he returned to Ste. Genevieve to welcome Bishop Du Bourg to his diocese, and to be present at the first Pontifical Mass of that prelate on January 1st, 1818.

After the arrival of Father Rosati and his band of Professors and Seminarians at the Barrens there began a regular exchange of letters between Fathers Pratte and Rosati, the remains of which are preserved in the Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese. The great helper in all needs, the great counselor in all doubts, was the kindly yet shrewd pastor of Ste. Genevieve. Still, he had a temper, though he generally succeeded in keeping it under control. Even the venerated Rosati once came in

for a sharp rebuff: Father Pratte had announced Confirmation services for the 22nd day of August 1819. Father Desmoulin of Kaskaskia, and Father Olivier of Prairie du Rocher were invited to be present at the solemnities. Now came an order from Rosati that Father Pratte should notify both Fathers Desmoulin and Olivier, that the Confirmation services were postponed, and that Father Olivier should fill the place of Father Desmoulin at Kaskaskia on the day they were to be held. Father Pratte answered under date of August 14, 1819:

“Monsieur:—I am much affected by the humiliating letter you have written to me, and I have not sent the letter for Mr. Desmoulin of Kaskaskia as you ask me to do in your letter. I will retain it until I have an order from Monseigneur who gave me instructions just contrary to the requests you have addressed to me. It seems to me that an order that has been fixed by Monseigneur<sup>2</sup> cannot be changed without a shock to the public and to myself. I have announced to my parish that Monseigneur will confirm at Ste. Genevieve on the 22nd of this month. Many persons are already prepared and waiting. These people come thirty or forty miles to have this pleasure. Furthermore, this is the fourth time that I have announced publicly something on the part of the Bishop which has failed to take place, and this seems to me to be too much. They have already complained at Ste. Genevieve; what will they say this time? I shall not make any announcements and things will come out all right according to the original orders.

You tell me to inform Mr. Olivier to go to Okaw. I have invited him, and he will be in Ste. Genevieve. Furthermore, you seem to ignore the fact that a man of seventy years cannot travel fifteen miles to assist at a ceremony after having said Mass in his own parish. It would be for him a journey of half a day. I have the honor to be,

Your humble servant,

H. Pratte, Curé”

As a sample of Father Pratte's priestly zeal and provident care the following extracts from his letters give fair evidence.

A Mission was to be held at Ste. Genevieve the last week in December, 1820. On October 28th, 1820, he writes to Father Rosati: “I shall have, I hope, an opportunity to write to Mr. Niel (then pastor of St. Louis and noted as an orator) next week. He promised he would come for the feast of Ste. Genevieve. I will write, and ask him to preach the panegyric. We shall have, on that day, the installation of a beautiful picture of Ste. Genevieve, which has been given for the occasion. They say it is very beautiful. Mr. Desmoulin will come and preach on hell, I shall preach two sermons—one on the judgment, penance and the delay

---

<sup>2</sup> “Monsigneur” is, of course, Bishop Du Bourg. Rosati was Vicar-General of this diocese.

of conversion—one on contrition and the difficulty of saving your soul.”

Later, on December 20th, he writes: “I have already announced a Mission for the last week of the year, and it will be finished the next Sunday, which is the feast of Ste. Genevieve. I hope to have Mr. Niel with me on that day.” The same letter is followed by a postscript:

“I learn at this moment of the accident to Mr. Rosati. I sympathize with him in his sufferings, and pray you to present to him my very humblest respects, also those of my father who is much grieved to learn of this trouble. If this accident should disarrange the Mission, I beg of you to let me know before Sunday.”

Of Father Pratte’s innate kindness and gentle manner many fine traits are preserved in our documents: One or two must suffice: Thus he writes on June 24th, 1821 to Father Rosati at the Barrens. “I have just received a letter from Shawneetown from an unfortunate woman who recommends herself to me and asks if I can give her news of her husband who was to have joined her at Shawneetown last fall. This unfortunate creature lived some time at Ste. Genevieve and is now in your county at the house of a man named Logan on Apple Creek. His name is Edward McGinnis, aged about thirty years, of a red complexion, of Irish birth. You can perhaps inquire among your people if he goes to church and try to get him to return to his poor wife and four children who are in great distress. I have replied to this woman and told her that I have written you on the subject.”

A certain sly humor lurks in the following passage of a letter to Rosati: “I am returning by Francois and Medard the little horse on which the laborer came from the Barrens. This man came to me early Monday morning and showed to me a billet de banque, which you gave him. He told me he could not buy the tools he needs, as the check will not pass here. I did not want to let him go without tools, so I loaned him five gourdes, which I charged to the Bishop.’ Since then I have never seen him again; whether or not he has returned, I do not know; so I return to you the horse.”

The Louisiana Academy established by Father Maxwell in 1808 had been closed after the founder’s death, as its principal, Mann Butler, the historian of Kentucky, had withdrawn from the position. Father Pratte realizing the necessity of a Catholic school, sought to reestablish the Academy on a thoroughly Catholic basis. It was known that Bishop Du Bourg had brought along with him three Brothers of the Christian Schools, Aubin, Antonin and Fulgence. They had been obtained from the Superior General, Brother Gerbaud at the personal intercession of Pope Pius VII, who wrote, December 30th, 1815:

“Our Venerable Brother William Du Bourg, consecrated and named by us as Bishop of New Orleans, ardently desires to have some of your

subjects to instruct the youth of his vast diocese which is in great need. We earnestly recommend to you, our dear son, this affair, and we wish, if you have some subjects who are willing to devote themselves to go into this region and whom you judge fit for this pious work, you would send them if this can be conveniently done. This will be a work very pleasing to God and to ourselves.”<sup>3</sup>

The Brothers were lodged for a time with the Vincentian Brothers under Father De la Croix at the home of Mrs. Layton, for the purpose of acquiring the English language and helping in the building operations of the Seminary. Bishop Du Bourg had been told by Brother Gerbaud, that the Brothers must maintain community life, and should, therefore, not be separated. But when Father Pratte’s request for one of the Brothers came, he sent Brother Antonin alone, because he had made greater progress in English than the others.

Early in January 1819 the Pastor of Ste. Genevieve wrote Father Rosati his satisfaction that Brother Antonin was at Ste. Genevieve. Brother Aubin and Fulgence soon joined Brother Antonin and they continued to teach at Ste. Genevieve for three years. They kept school in the Building which had been erected in 1808 by the citizens of Ste. Genevieve under the direction of Father Maxwell for the Louisiana Academy. After the death of Father Pratte, when the Parish was placed in charge of the Vincentian Fathers, the three Brothers were separated by the Bishop and placed at the head of three schools in widely separated localities. Finding communication with each other and with their Superiors very difficult, they seem to have gradually lost the spirit of their state and, one by one, left the Order.

In a letter written to Father Rosati on July 18th, 1822, Father Pratte regrets that he cannot accept the invitation, “so often repeated,” to assist at the celebration of the feast of St. Vincent, “because of the great number who are ill at Ste. Genevieve and at Kaskaskia, from where they send for me very often.” This seems to have been the last letter written by him, for in August he was stricken by a fever and, after three weeks of illness, died on September 1st, 1822. He was so beloved that he was mourned by everyone, Protestants as well as Catholics, and his funeral was attended by all the inhabitants of the village and surrounding country. He was interred under the sanctuary of the church. Father Rosati conducted the services, assisted by Father Olivier of Prairie du Rocher, and wrote on the record a beautiful tribute to his departed friend which concludes with these words: “His memory will be a benediction not only in the parish but in all the rest of the Diocese, and particularly, to the Seminary, which will always regard him as one of its principal benefactors.”<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Archives of Christian Brothers, Pocantico Hills, New York.

<sup>4</sup> Register of Burials, Ste. Genevieve Parish.

After Father Pratte's unexpected death Bishop Du Bourg had the intention of appointing his favorite Angelo Inglesi as his successor in Ste. Genevieve. Inglesi was at that time in Europe, hobnobbing with almost all the royalty and nobility of the Old world, and making large collections for the poor Mission of Louisiana. If he had been present on the spot, he would have certainly received the appointment. But Inglesi's unworthiness was already suspected by many: and for some reason or other, not the clerical highflyer, but a most excellent priest, Father Francis Dahmen, a Lazarist, was sent to Ste. Genevieve.

Father Dahmen was born at Dueren on the Rhine, March 23, 1789, and in due time entered the Seminary, probably at Cologne. As all the country west of the Rhine was under French dominion during the Napoleonic wars, young Dahmen, as we have already stated, was obliged to enter the army of the Corsican as a cavalry soldier. As such he took part in several great battles. As Canon O'Hanlon tells us: "He had a vivid recollection of the dreadful scenes he had witnessed on the battlefield: his anecdotes of the Emperor Napoleon were original and most interesting; he was ready at all times to relate his own personal adventures, and freely to pronounce a very sound opinion on the maneuvers and policy of his renowned leader, having had an enthusiastic regard for his genius and resources as a general. Father Dahmen's undoubted courage, sense of honor, uprightness and integrity of character won our admiration; his brusque and military air was independent of forms, while his courtesy and kindness rendered him lovable to a degree. His piety and learning were well recognized, when he was obliged to quit his Saxon Seminary and serve as a young conscript, and he returned to resume his religious vocation and studies when the great army was disbanded."<sup>5</sup>

The discharged soldier did not, however, return to his former Seminary but journeyed to the Eternal City where a brother of his had already entered the holy priesthood. When Bishop Du Bourg visited Rome for the purpose of gaining recruits for the diocese of Louisiana, young Dahmen was glad to join his standard, and when Fathers De Andreis and Rosati started on their long and wearisome journey across the mountains and plains to Bordeaux and thence across the sea to America, he was with them. He received the four minor orders at Bordeaux, subdeaconship at St. Thomas Seminary near Bardstown, deaconship at Ste. Genevieve.

In December 1818 he entered the Novitiate of the Congregation under Father De Andreis in St. Louis, where also he was ordained priest by Bishop Du Bourg on September 5th, 1819. He was then a little over thirty years of age. His first mission was Vincennes, from which he was recalled on account of non-support.

---

<sup>5</sup> O'Hanlon.

On May 28th, we find him at the Barrens, where he made his final vows. As the people of Vincennes petitioned the Bishop to send back to their parish the good Father Dahmen, the Bishop relented, and the priest returned. But as no efforts were made to give him a decent support, the recall was made final. After a short stay at Florissant during Father De La Croix' visit among the Indians tribes of the Missouri River in 1822, Father Dahmen received the appointment to Ste. Genevieve, where he arrived on September 29th, 1822. This selection was an admirable one in more than one respect. He spoke and wrote French as his mother tongue, though he was of German stock. The schools in the Rhineland in his youth were French, whilst the language of the common people remained German. In the army French had been spoken almost exclusively. As Canon O'Hanlon tells us, he had a correct knowledge of the world and of its ordinary pursuits, with a practical manner of appreciating and utilizing them. He had a natural gift of eloquence in French, English and German. His cheerful disposition won every heart: his fine figure and military bearing and sturdy manliness impressed the judgment in his favor. He was, all in all, a representative man. When the citizens of Ste. Genevieve wished to form a Literary Society, Father Dahmen was with them heart and soul.

The Church of Ste. Genevieve was a large log-building erected in 1794. Now after thirty-seven years of constant use the building had become ruinous. The parishioners voted to erect a new Church of stone. The old log structure was accordingly torn down, and the cornerstone of the new edifice was laid on the 27th of July 1831. The building, though completed at an early date, was consecrated in 1837.

It was in Father Dahmen's hospitable home that the celebrated Father Charles Nerinckx died the death of a saint. He came from Loretto in Kentucky to Bethlehem Convent near the Barrens on a visit to his Sisterhood there: then he made a visit to Florissant, the home of the Jesuits, whom he had brought to America, and on the return journey took seriously ill, and found a kind welcome in Ste. Genevieve, where he died, August 12th, 1824.<sup>6</sup>

Of the former dependencies of Ste. Genevieve, New Bourbon was now no more; St. Michaels had a pastor of its own in the person of Father Potini, and after his departure, of Father Francis Cellini; Cape Girardeau was attended from the Barrens, and only St. Joachim's of Old Mines remained in his care until in 1828. Father John Bouillier was appointed its pastor. Yet, Ste. Genevieve was growing in population, and certain parts of the district were steadily gaining swarms of immigrants from Germany. At the opening of the Nineteenth Century there were but few Germans in the parish; but in the second decade of that

---

<sup>6</sup> Rothensteiner, "Father Charles Nerinckx, and his Relations to the Diocese of St. Louis," in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, 157-201.

Century, German immigration assumed considerable proportions in both Ste. Genevieve and Perry Counties. At first this stream came from Alsace, then almost exclusively from the Duchy of Baden. Matthew Ziegler seems to have been the first German, after Father de Saint Pierre, to come to Ste. Genevieve.

As the ever increasing immigration of German Catholics necessitated a corresponding increase of the number of German priests, the authorities were on the look-out for German Seminarians.

In 1833 the Seminary counted four students of German descent, among its pupils: J. H. Fortman from Westphalian Muenster, Ambrose Heim, Charles Rolle and Nicholas Stehle from Lorraine, Casper Ostlangenberg and Joseph Fischer arriving a little later.

When Father John Timon became Superior of the Lazarists, he thought of Father Dahmen's capabilities as a teacher, especially his knowledge of German, and he determined to recall him to the Seminary. Bishop Rosati appointed the Frenchman J. Bergeron as successor to Dahmen as pastor of Ste. Genevieve. On the 18th of May Father Dahmen left the parish for the Seminary. But the people of Ste. Genevieve were determined that the good pastor, who during the fourteen years of his ministry among them, had enjoyed their confidence and reverence and love, should be sent back to them. As the best means to attain this much desired object, they determined, at a regular parish meeting, held on Pentecost Sunday, at the parish residence, to sell, at a nominal price, the Church and all pertaining to it, to Father Timon the Superior of the Congregation of the Missions. In notifying their Bishop of this proposed step they hint, that this offer is made in the hope that Father Dahmen be left in charge of the parish as before, a measure, as they declare, "as conducive to the progress of religion, as it is calculated to secure the prosperity of the village."<sup>7</sup>

Bishop Rosati prevailed upon Father Timon, who was then Superior of the Vincentians and Vicar General of the diocese, to send Father Dahmen back to Ste. Genevieve. The transfer of the Church property to Father John Timon was duly affected. Father Bergeron gracefully accepted the inevitable and retired to the "more hospitable land, New Orleans." Father Dahmen returned to his flock and received as assistants Father Mignard and, after him, the Italian Father Gandolfo. For a short time Father Brandts administered the parish until the pastor's return, November 13th, 1836. The Catholic Directory for 1836 remarks in regard to Ste. Genevieve: "Sermon in French and German, and sometimes in English." On the 12th day of November, "post sexennium absolutum," the new Church was consecrated, by Bishop Rosati, assisted by a large concourse of priests.

---

<sup>7</sup> The title to the church-property of Ste. Genevieve was restored to the parish in the days of Archbishop Kain.

Five months after this memorable event, June 25th, 1837, the Sisters of Loretto opened a Convent School for girls in the old Detchmendi Mansion. The community consisted of nine religious: Sister Agnes Hartt was Superior. One of the nuns was Sister Catherine, formerly Odile Valle. The number of boarders in 1837 was twelve, of day-scholars forty-five.

After a few years the school was placed in care of the Sisters of St. Joseph. There was also a school for boys under a lay-teacher.

The priests of Ste. Genevieve, at that time, had in charge as stations: Ste. Annes' at Little Canada, Ste. Philomenas at Reviere aux Vases and St. Matthews on Establishment Creek. Later on when chapels were built at these places, the parish of Reviere aux Vases received the title St. Anthony, and the Establishment, now Bloomsdale, that of Ste. Philomena, which it still bears, whilst that of Reviere aux Vases has been changed to S. S. Philip and James. Father Dahmen remained in charge of Ste. Genevieve until 1840, when his Superiors recalled him to the Seminary. He was succeeded by Father Gandolfo, with the French Father Brands and the German Nicholas Stehle as assistants. German immigration was literally flooding the Counties of Ste. Genevieve and Perry and, in lesser degree, Cape Girardeau and Madison. "One hundred thousand Germans are expected, or are on the way to the United States," writes Father Gandolfo to his Superior in Paris, "one can scarcely form an idea of the multitude arriving daily. The German language is getting to be as necessary as English and French, and we need a priest here, who speaks the language. The few men we have are over-loaded with work. Mr. Huland, (Father Uhland) instructs the boys in the Little Seminary in German: I myself take German lessons from Father Stehle; but "*durus est hic sermo.*"<sup>8</sup>

It was in Father Gandolfo's day, July 17th, 1841, that the rock-church built by Father Dahmen was injured by lightning. The electric fluid struck the gable end and, descending along the roof to the sacristy, pierced the solid wall on its way and struck the frame of the picture of Ste. Genevieve without doing any harm to the painting itself, then descended to the altar, taking away its gilding, and passed to the ground floor. A pious parishioner, John Doyle, kneeling in prayer at the altar rail, was touched by the lightning-stroke and stunned, yet recovered from the shock. The new brick church was built long after, on the site, and partly on the very foundations of Father Dahmen's rock structure.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Draft of Father Gandolfo's letter in the Archives of the Parish of Ste. Genevieve, Mo.

<sup>9</sup> Rozier's, "History of the Early Settlement of the Mississippi Valley," p. 117.

## CHAPTER 18

### CATHOLIC NEW MADRID

After the death or departure of Father Gibault, Pastor of New Madrid and the Post of Arkansas, Father Maxwell of Ste. Genevieve was the only priest left, and to his charge fell all the parishes in the wide territory of Upper Louisiana, soon to be called Missouri. Then occurred that terrible visitation, the New Madrid earthquake, which agitated the country around the mouth of the Ohio from December 1811 to February, 1812, and which, as Senator Linn, of Missouri, wrote, "after shaking the valley of the Mississippi to its center, vibrated along the courses of the rivers and valleys, and passing the primitive mountain barriers, died away along the shores of the Atlantic."<sup>1</sup>

Such an appalling phenomenon, which changed the course of rivers, submerged many of the higher pieces of land and elevated others that had been submerged before, drained many of the numerous lakes, and formed others, with bottoms deeper than the Mississippi, had a most discouraging effect on the progress of the settlement. Instead of gaining accessions, New Madrid was losing many of its inhabitants, and to accelerate the decline of the town the river threw the weight of its current against the higher ground on which New Madrid was built so as to constantly reduce its eastern limits and either wash away the habitations or drive them further West. The ancient site of New Madrid is now the channel of the Mississippi. Father Gibault's church of St. Isidore, together with his residence and kitchen and bake house, were swallowed up by the mighty river. New Madrid seemed dead, at least spiritually, for about twenty years after Father Gibault's death, without church or priest or the Holy sacrifice. But the people did not lose the faith, and a revival of religion was preparing under the counsels of Divine Providence. But the Parish of St. Isidore was gone with its Spanish patron, and when the church of New Madrid emerged once more from its dark night into the broad light of history, it was under the new name of St. John the Baptist.

It is neither a very interesting nor a very important account we have to offer in regard to the religious growth of the old river-town of New Madrid during the last hundred years. Political upheavals, destructive earthquakes, a sanguinary war with armies traversing the territory from south to north, from north to south, and chiefly the dearth of priestly help in the very extensive diocese of St. Louis, were

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rozier's History, pp. 109-208, and Houck, "History of Missouri," vol. I, p. 172.

the main causes of the slow development, often looking, for all the world, like a sad retrogression of Catholic life, in the city of New Madrid and vicinity.

About three years after his arrival in the diocese, November 1820, Bishop Du Bourg wrote to Father Rosati from New Madrid:

"I stopped here to see what condition Religion is in at this place. These poor people, in all sixty Catholic families, have been in the last twenty years without any religious assistance whatever, no marriages, no baptisms, no sacraments. Still they wish to have a priest; but I do not think they have the means to support one; neither do I believe that it would be good for a priest to stay here. Nevertheless, I deem it necessary that a missionary should come here three or four times a year. Mr. Robert McCoy,<sup>2</sup> at whose home I am now, will give him lodging and board; he has a nice hall where Mass may be said. The congregation will give the Priest \$70.00 every time he comes: he shall remain each time a fortnight to instruct, etc. I wish that Fr. Potini should undertake this mission. He may go first to Cape Girardeau to Mr. Steinbeck, whose family are Catholic, and will say Mass there for the few Catholics of that quarter. Thence he will go to Mr. Hopkins, 29 miles farther. He will fare very well there; Mr. Hopkins' family also are Catholic. From Mr. Hopkins' to New Madrid the distance is about 30 miles, and I am told the road is good all the way down. Father Potini should take along whatever is needed for the celebration of Mass and the administration of the Sacraments. I think that at Cape Girardeau, they will also contribute their share of the expense for the priests' journey. He may begin as soon as possible.

L. Wm. of La.

On further reflection, I think Father Cellini will be more suitable for this mission than Father Potini, on account of his more mature age."<sup>3</sup>

There is a slight mistake in this letter as to the length of time during which New Madrid was deprived of priest and altar. From a letter of Father Maxwell to Father Gibault at New Madrid it appears that the old missionary was still the pastor of New Madrid in October 1801. Louis Houck in his *History of Missouri* states that "until his death in 1802 he (Gibault) was active in all spiritual matters, and as priest of the parish received a regular salary from the government."

Others give the year of Father Gibault's death as 1804, which opinion seems, at least, probable.

Besides, Father Maxwell from Ste. Genevieve and Father Lusson from St. Charles, visited the place after Father Gibault's death: the

<sup>2</sup> Robert McCoy had been in the service of the Spanish Government, as Secretary of the Civil Administration.

<sup>3</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese, Du Bourg's letters.

period of utter desolation, therefore, was considerably less than twenty years. Yet it was sufficiently long and dreary to bring on spiritual decay. In consequence of the Bishop's recommendation, not Father Potini, but Cellini was sent to New Madrid. On May 24, 1821, Father Rosati writes to Father Francis Baccari, Vicar General of the Congregation of the Missions in Rome as follows: "Father Cellini, besides the sick calls and confessions, has the charge and direction of the work here at home. Moreover, he has a parish of French people, amounting to 70 families, at New Madrid, on the Mississippi river, more than 100 miles from the Seminary. He goes there three or four times a year, and the trip takes him four or five weeks each time. Those poor people have had no priest for twenty years. You may well imagine in what condition they were. Ignorance cannot go any farther. It is morally a forest to frighten the stoutest heart. However, there are good dispositions. Father Cellini went there for the first time during the month of March; he baptized there a great many people, even adult persons, and two Protestants; he urged them to build a church, and in a short while, when that church is finished (it does not take long in this country to build), he will go there again."<sup>4</sup>

The church was not built at that time, and there is nothing to show that Father Cellini repeated his visit, except an obscure allusion to other visits in a letter of Father Cellini to Father Rosati, dated October 22, 1821: "I have written to Mr. McCoy on the subject you mentioned to me in your letter; and I hope that when our Brothers arrive there, they will be assisted as we wish."<sup>5</sup>

The McCoy's were, no doubt, the family of Robert McCoy of New Madrid, with whom Bishop Du Bourg had made arrangements for future priestly services in 1820.

By an accident, or rather a dispensation of Divine Providence, Mother Duchesne of blessed memory, the first Superior of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, was to bless the sadly-forsaken place with her presence. Baunard-Fullerton gives the following account in *The Life of Mother Duchesne*:

"On the return trip the "*Cincinnati*" ran aground on a sandbank opposite New Madrid, a hundred (nearly two hundred) miles from St. Louis. The river was so low that it was impossible to forsee when the boat could proceed—this delay and uncertainty were harassing! Mad. Duchesne... resolved to turn this interval to account by making her annual retreat... A fortnight elapsed in this way, and then she received a pressing invitation from Catholics in the neighborhood, Mr.

<sup>4</sup> Rosati to Baccari, Archives of Procurator-General of the Lazarists in Rome.

<sup>5</sup> Cellini to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

and Mrs. Kay, to come and stay in their house. Mad. Dehesne and Miss Pratte accordingly spent five days with these kind people.”<sup>6</sup>

The next visit made to New Madrid by Lazarist missionaries was that of Father John Mary Odin, just ordained, accompanied by the deacon John Timon, who was to rise, in the course of time, to the dignity of the first Bishop of Buffalo. The trip was made during September and October 1824. In their report the missionaries write: “After a three days’ journey (from Jackson) we arrived at New Madrid. Our sojourn there was short, in spite of the great needs and the earnest prayers of the inhabitants, who have not had a resident priest among them for nearly twenty-five years.”<sup>7</sup> Mentioning their return in his Diary, on October 31, 1824, Rosati writes: “One priest should be sent to New Madrid where he is much needed.”

And under date of December 1, 1824, the Diary of Rosati reads:

“I have promised two men of New Madrid to send a priest to that city at the opening of the Spring of next year. (1825).”

Some one must have been sent, for on April 12, 1825, Bishop Du Bourg writes to Rosati evidently in answer to some good and hopeful news communicated to him by Bishop Rosati: “I am much pleased with the dispositions manifested at New Madrid.”

From the Diary of Bishop Rosati it appears, that Father John M. Odin, C.M., made another visit to New Madrid, this time in company of Father Leo DeNeckere, also a future bishop of New Orleans. Under date of April 3, 1826, he writes: “I have sent De Neckere and Odin to New Madrid to remain there until Pentecost.” And on April 17: “Through the courtesy of Mr. McCoy I have received a letter from Mr. Odin, whom I had sent to New Madrid on the 3d with Mr. De Neckere. On April 4th, De Neckere preached a sermon at the town of Jackson, having been very kindly received by the people of that place, among whom there were some few Catholic families.” And again, on May 20th, he records the return of De Neckere and Odin to the Seminary from New Madrid: “There (at New Madrid) they endeavored to instruct the people (about eighty families) who had for many years been deprived of all spiritual help, by giving Catechetical instructions twice a day, and two sermons on each Sunday and Feast-day. On Ascension day they gave First Holy Communion to fifteen boys and girls. The number of communions would have been much larger, if the inhabitants of the country had not been prevented from attending by frequent and heavy rains, which caused an inundation, and by urgent labors on the farms. They gave Baptism to more than fifty in-

<sup>6</sup> L. Cit., cf. Erskine, p. 259.

<sup>7</sup> “*Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*,” vol. II, p. 380.

fants. Being now fully convinced of obtaining a resident priest the people of New Madrid have decided to erect a church-building, for which purpose they have started a subscription and have already raised five hundred dollars. It is a pity that such a dire spiritual need connected with so much good will could not at once find relief."<sup>8</sup> Still a number of years had to pass before New Madrid was again to have a church and a priest of its own.

But Fathers Odin and Timon were to return to New Madrid once more; Timon having been ordained priest on the 24th of September, 1826. Bishop Rosati's Diary tells us that Odin and Timon started for New Madrid on October 1st. On the 12th of October (1826) the Bishop writes to Odin at New Madrid: "Father Niel has already seven priests for this country. We will have wherewith to have someone at New Madrid."<sup>9</sup> On October 19th, Rosati received letters from Timon and Odin who were still at New Madrid. On October 20th, the Bishop wrote to Odin: "The news that you and Father Timon sent us, caused us much gratification. You may assure those gentlemen that they will not be deprived of the visits of the priests, and that, as far as possible, we shall send them the same. The next visit may take place in the beginning of January, *vita comite*." On October 31st, both missionaries are at the Seminary once more. Bishop Rosati remarks that they had endeavored to excite the people of New Madrid to the proper spirit of gaining the indulgence of the Jubilee. Their success was marked by more than sixty confessions, forty holy communions, and a number of baptisms."<sup>10</sup>

Whether the promised visit was made in Spring of 1827, we cannot say, as Bishop Rosati, at that time, was absent in Kentucky.

In searching the Archives for a document concerning Father Lewis Tucker, we found a weatherbeaten paper of great importance for our present purpose, the Report of Father John Timon, C.M., concerning New Madrid and the Post of Arkansas for 1830. It is addressed to Bishop Rosati and dated December 4, 1830:

"I can send, You, Monsigneur, but very imperfect accounts of New Madrid and Arkansas. The length of time has effaced much from my memory, and I cannot now lay my hands on my notes. What I can recollect is that at New Madrid there are about 90 Catholic families, almost all Creole French, and all in utmost want of instruction, ignorant but attached to their religion. During the last five years about eighty

---

<sup>8</sup> Rosati, Diary, *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> Father Niel was sent abroad to collect funds and engage missionaries for the Diocese of St. Louis. In 1845 he published, at Paris, "*La Voie Du Salut*."

<sup>10</sup> Diary of Rosati, *passim*.

persons received the Holy Communion, about one hundred and twenty went to confession, and a great many children, both of Catholic and Protestant parents, were baptized, as were also about eight adults. Before the visit Mr. Odin made to them, they had not a priest, save on a passing visit, for many years, and now they are without one these three years. New Madrid is one of the oldest posts of Louisiana; it had its Commandant in the times of the French and Spanish domination, and a church which has been swallowed up by the river. The ancient site, by the encroachments of the Mississippi, is now a quarter of a mile from the shore of the river. The inhabitants lately made a subscription for building a new church, about \$650.00 were subscribed, but they seem little inclined to begin, until they can have assurance of a clergyman. All professions desire that one might be sent. They would also wish that the priest might superintend a school; and that, if possible, some nuns might be sent for the instruction of female children. I do not know any point, where, as I think, after some privations and sacrifices in the beginning, a good school or college might be more advantageously placed.”<sup>11</sup>

Father Timon's suggestion was favorably received by the Bishop but could not be carried out until two years had elapsed. Now, two young and energetic men were detached for the upbuilding of New Madrid.

On April 27th, 1832, Rev. Victor Paillason departed for that place from Kaskaskia, where he had been pastor since December 22, 1830, in company with the newly ordained Peter Paul Lefevere as assistant. On October 13, 1832, Bishop Rosati had given the Sisters of Loretto permission to found a monastery and school of their order at New Madrid. Father Paillason entered upon this laborious task with great zeal and energy. But on the 29th of June he came to St. Louis with the sad news that the house he had almost completed was destroyed by fire. The particulars of this undertaking and failure we learn from a letter of the youthful Peter Paul Lefevere to his Bishop:

“You are undoubtedly already informed of the great misfortune that happened to us on the eve of Corpus Christi by the combustion of our house which was already nearly completed. At that dreadful event, struck with sadness and grief, we both thought immediately to abandon our post, and to return to St. Louis; but seeing the apparent anxiety and activity of the people to renew what we had undertaken, Mr. Paillason found it expedient that he alone should go up in order to inform you of the sad and serious condition to which this misfortune has brought us, and to know what there should now be done. As he seems

---

<sup>11</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

to have more courage than I, and to show a kind of punctilio to recommence the establishment: I write these lines by his instigation to expose to you my depression, and also the embarrassment and grief which might cause too dangerous an engagement. You know Most Reverend Sir, that in the prospectus he has given of this establishment, he has expressly specified and determined, that it would be erected and directed on the same plan as that in the Barrens, and also that there would be erected a convent of nuns for the purpose of keeping a female school. Besides, he has expressly given notice that in both of these Seminaries or Academies, as they call them here, no mention would ever be made of Religion, or of whatever regards the Catholic doctrine and worship. Now the people, seeing the loss of so great an improvement and benefit for this place, offer willingly to subscribe for the rebuilding of that Seminary. We, after a sufficient inquiry and information, find that the building, in the manner the people desire and will have it, would cost, at least, from nine hundred to a thousand dollars, making deduction of all superfluities and considering the building as rough and simple as possible; and the sum of the subscriptions, calculating at large, could only amount to five hundred dollars. So that we would run into debt four or five hundred dollars. Moreover, being once engaged, we would incur debts upon debts; later, for the convent and after that, for the church. You conceive very well that this could never be paid with the revenue of the school, which, I am sure, will never exceed the expense of our corporal sustenance.

“Besides you know very well that the school we would be able to teach could and would never be able to satisfy the idea and expectation of the people; which, since our arrival, they have continually kept up and increased, thinking to establish and erect themselves upon the ruins of the Barrens. So, considering the little prospect and hope of future progress in the propagation of faith, knowing the inconstancy of the people, and that their only motive and intent is their temporal interest, having no money in cash, I shall never venture to engage myself for one dollar, under the obligation of paying it with the revenue of a precarious school. Because, Most Rev. Sir, knowing the dreadful situation of many priests of America merely on account of debts, I dread them more than death itself, and would prefer to cultivate the land from morning till evening rather than entangle myself so far. It would also be very painful to me to depend upon the whim of the people, for a worldly subsistence, because they would have subscribed for the house, without having ever the consolation of seeing any conversion to God, and even without having any time of working for my own salvation. Till now we never said Mass in public, but always privately, and even missed it often ourselves on account of manual labor. We preached

about six times in the court house, where the people assembled merely to see one another for amusement and pass-time, as they say it themselves. You see that the present and future consolation either temporal or spiritual, is very small, and besides our characters differ in many points, one from another. If, therefore, you could apply some remedy to my present situation which is lamentable, or assign me some place, where by means of a frugal sustenance, I could work with more fruit for the salvation of others and that of myself, which is the only motive that brought me to America, you would infinitely oblige. Your most humble servant."<sup>12</sup>

Bishop Rosati requested Father Lefevere to stay at New Madrid until Father Paillason's return from the Post of Arkansas, whither he had been sent. Then on August 29, 1832, Lefevere was appointed to the mission of Salt River in Northeastern Missouri, to do valiant work for holy Church and to become in due time Bishop and Administrator of Detroit.

Father Victor Paillason continued his ministrations at New Madrid until 1836, when he entered the Novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Florissant, May 18th.

After a brief interval Father Paillason found a successor in the person of the newly ordained Ambrose Heim. Being born at Rodalbe in the diocese of Nancy in 1807, Father Heim came to St. Louis June 15th, 1833, and was raised to the priesthood July 23rd, 1837, by Bishop Rosati in the chapel of St. Mary's of the Barrens. Immediately after his ordination the youthful priest became pastor of New Madrid, and remained there until 1841. Father Heim built a church of wood and dedicated it in honor of St. John Baptist. This was the second church-building after Father Gibault's church of St. Isidore had been washed away by the river in 1816. Father Heim became pastor of Prairie du Long, and in 1843 chaplain of the Sisters of the Visitation at Kaskaskia, and in 1847 Secretary to the Bishop. Father Heim was the First Spiritual Director of the first Conference of St. Vincent de Paul in the United States.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>13</sup> Schulte, Rev. Paul, "The Old Cathedral Conference of St. Vincent de Paul Society," in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, pp. 5-14.



ST. MARY'S SEMINARY AT THE BARRENS, Perryville, Mo., Built in 1818



## ST. MARY'S OF THE BARRENS UNDER FATHER TORNATORE

The Seminary of St. Mary's at the Barrens had been under the rectorship of Father Rosati from the time of its foundation and remained so even after Rosati's election to the Coadjutorship:<sup>1</sup> but when he became Bishop of St. Louis in his own right and Administrator of New Orleans, this burden, as well as the Superiorship of the entire congregation in America, was felt as a hindrance to all efficient work as Bishop, Superior and Rector. But where shall he find a substitute as Seminary director? He applied to his Superior at Rome; for the American Congregation of the Mission was still a part of the Roman Province.

In 1827, Bishop Rosati was gladdened by the news that Father Angelo Boccardo, a distinguished member of the Congregation of the Mission, was on his way to the Barrens to take the position of Superior. In order to make his advent a most joyful event, Father Baccari had intrusted to his care two-thousand francs, partly granted by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, partly donated by private individuals, and by Father Baccari himself, all to be delivered to Bishop Rosati for the use of his missions.

But, on July 27th, 1827, the sad news was brought from New Orleans, that Father Boccardo had accidentally dropped the package that contained the money and also a number of letters, into the swirling waves of the Mississippi. But worse still; Father Boccardo, weakened by the hardships of the long voyage, was shocked so dreadfully by the accident, that he in his anguish and dread, determined to return to Italy with the next ship. Nothing could shake his resolution, and so they had to let him depart. In writing to Cardinal Cappellari about this double loss, Bishop Rosati reminded him, that he, as Bishop of one See and Administrator of another, really could not perform the duties of a Superior of the Lazarists, and begged him to send back to him the good Father Boccardo, whom he could use so very advantageously at the Barrens. But, Father Boccardo never returned, and the heavily burdened Bishop continued his gentle importunities.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 Propaganda and the Vicar-General C. M., had stipulated that Rosati "must remain Superior of the House and Seminary over there, and head of the whole mission in America." Cf. "Catholic Historical Review," III, p. 171.

2 Rosati to Cardinal Cappellari, July 27, 1827, rough draft in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

Father John B. Tornatore, the one time professor of Dogmatic Theology as successor to Father De Andreis, and now Assistant to the Vicar General at Monte Citorio, seemed the proper person. Father Baccari intended Father Tornatore for other important work, and would not grant Bishop Rosati's request: At last, a very urgent letter to the Superior General at Paris elicited the order that Father Tornatore should be sent to America. Great was Bishop Rosati's joy when in April 1830, the long-desired Father arrived in New Orleans. Having assisted at the consecration of Bishop De Neckere, the new Superior assumed control of the house at the Barrens in the early part of July, and was appointed Visitor, (January 6, 1831) and also Vicar General of the diocese of St. Louis.

There were at the Barrens four priests, Odin, Paquin, Timon and Brands, who had charge of a College with more than one hundred boys, and a number of Seminarians. The College was the main support of the entire establishment. As Father Shaw tells us: "The 'Barrens' of that far-off time boasted a log church, poor, small and crude. The Home of the Missionaries was likewise poor and inconvenient. They themselves, with hands unused to such labor, felled trees and hewed them into logs wherewith to fashion their first home. The record of those days spells toil and trial and much resignation. They fared frugally, went scantily clad, and endured with extreme difficulty the rigors of the climate, unused as they were to extremes of heat and cold.

"Steps were soon taken to build a larger and better church. They designed to build a replica of the Lazarist church in Rome. Only when confronted with overwhelming odds did they consent to narrow the dimensions of the original plans. The corner stone was laid in 1827. Work progressed slowly and funds were meager."<sup>3</sup>

Father Tornatore entered upon his new duties with right good will. The four priests were with him, heart and soul. But among the brothers dissatisfaction was rife. Complaint after complaint, accusation after accusation, flew to Rome, all clothed in the garb of piety and zeal for the glory of God. The rigor of the climate, the barrenness of the land, the multiplicity of occupations, were only the reasoning of the great accusation that the observance of the Rule was made impossible by the presence of seminarians and college boys in the same house. Some of the priests insisted on Father Baccari's order that all members of the Congregation should be withdrawn from the parishes, a measure that would have ruined the prospects of the diocese for many years.

All were for getting rid of the College, which they said, was the business of the Jesuits, and not of the Lazarist Community. Indeed,

---

<sup>3</sup> Shaw, T. M., "Our Lady of the Assumption."

they would have closed the Seminary at the Barrens and transferred it to Lower Louisiana, where under a milder climate and with greater facilities it would be possible to work for the glory of God and the good of souls.

Father Rosati, during his rectorship, had experienced this secret opposition. Father Cellini seems to have been one of the chief fomentors of trouble.

"As to the observance of the Rule," Bishop Rosati wrote in 1828, "I have tried my very best and I think I have succeeded. Our priests who live here in community are rather over-zealous than negligent. It is difficult to satisfy the brothers. Cellini is not built for community life; he should not come back to us."

Father Tornatore met the same difficulties with much less power of resistance, than Bishop Rosati had displayed. He was not gifted as a speaker, he never did acquire the idiomatic use of English, his health was precarious. Yet he made use of his authority. He gave orders to the priests employed in parochial work to repair to the Seminary. Not one of the five obeyed him. With the brothers he had recourse to reproofs and penance, and even the denial of the sacraments, but all to no avail. Within one year after he had assumed the reins of government, no fewer than nine subjects had left the community. Though there was no priest among the recalcitrants, the loss was a serious one. Father Baccari ordered that the Seminarians be kept separate from the College boys: Father Tornatore claimed that this was impossible, as some of the seminarians had to be employed as teachers of College classes, others as prefects, others as infirmarians. The Seminarians were needed in the College, the College was needed for the support of the community. An old grievance in regard to the presence in the kitchen of female negro slaves, which had been remedied long ago, still lingered in the mind of the Roman authorities. Father Tornatore brushed aside the old spiderweb and proceeded to enlighten his Superior on the real condition of things in America:

"Now in regard to the observance of the Rule, here is our order of the day: At 4:30 rising for us of the congregation (The Seminarians and College boys get up at 5:00). At five, meditation in the chapel. At six Community Mass; mass is said at the same time at the College. At 7:30 breakfast in common for Seminarians, College boys and those of us who care to have any; Fifteen minutes are allowed for this meal, which is taken in silence and during which there is reading. After breakfast, fifteen minutes of recreation in silence. This practice I found when I came here: it had been introduced by Bishop Rosati; and accordingly I have maintained it. After this recreation, that is, at 8 o'clock all are occupied, the ones to teach school, others to study,

the others to various employments, the College boys being apart from the Seminarians. At twelve, particular examen and dinner in silence, during which there is always reading, and, after dinner our customary recreation. There is no siesta, but spiritual reading for Seminarians in the Seminary and for the boys in College. Then study and class for Seminarians and College boys until four. At four, Seminarians and College boys are given half an hour of recreation, after which they are occupied in their respective duties until 7:15 at which time there is particular examen. Supper as usual, and recreation which the Seminarians take in the Seminary, and the boys in the College, under the Supervision of their Director Father Paquin.

Besides, we have for us members of the Community, the Conference on Tuesday; and on Sunday, all assist at the explanation of the Gospel at high Mass, and the same is to be said of other spiritual exercises.

Regarding food and clothing, no one is wanting anything: all are provided both in health and sickness.

Now would Your Reverence please tell me whether in all this there is anything out of order, whether there is anything to add or suppress; if there is, it will be done with the fullest submission and alacrity."<sup>4</sup>

Whether these explanations were considered satisfactory or not by Father Baccari, they were quickly followed by a notification to the writer that a successor would be given him ere long. Father Tornatore accepted in all submission his removal from office, awaiting only his successor's letter of appointment.<sup>5</sup> The death of Father Baccari intervening, Father Tornatore was continued in the office of Superior. Even the erection of America as an independent Province of the Order with Father Timon as Visitor, did not change the status of Father Tornatore as Superior of the Barrens.

Better days were in store for the Community, the departure of the malcontents proving a blessing in disguise. The Institute began to flourish once more, the number of priests rose to fifteen, with five students of theology and eight novices. Concord now reigned among the brothers, working for the cause of God under the direction of obedience. It was under Father Tornatore's administration that the construction of the Seminary Church was finally completed, and its solemn consecration held by Bishop Rosati, October 29th, 1837. Father Odin had in the meantime journeyed to Europe to solicit alms from the wealth of the old world to speed the upbuilding of the Seminary Church.

---

<sup>4</sup> Tornatore to Baccari, April 18, 1833.

<sup>5</sup> Tornatore to Baccari, November 1834.

The danger to the Seminary, however, was not as yet completely removed. In 1836, Father Nozo, the Superior General of the Lazarists issued a decree, suppressing the College at the Barrens and demanding a payment of 600 francs from the Bishop for every Seminary student's board and tuition: Another decree recalled all the Lazarist priests from parochial work, and ordered them to live in community.

Under date of March 4, 1836, the Diary of Bishop Rosati has the following entry:

"I answered the Rev. D. Nozo, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, and proved with plain evidences, that the decrees concerning the House of the Congregation in my diocese had been made inconsiderately, and that I could not possibly give my assent to the proposed suppression of the College of St. Mary's and the annual payment of 600 francs for every clerical student: but, that I did consent to the measure of recalling all the priests (of the Congregation) who are now in the Parishes of the Diocese, to Community life. I asked him that the Seminary and College be left in their present condition, and that another Seminary be erected in St. Louis, and still another in New Orleans according to the request of the Illustrious and Most Reverend Mr. Blanc."<sup>6</sup>

What came of these wishes and plans must be reserved as subject matter for a future chapter. The consecration of the Seminary Church of St. Mary's calls for our attention. The Catholic Telegraph of Cincinnati, November 30, 1837, brought the minute account of the great event by an eyewitness; from which we have extracted the following particulars:

"The ceremony of the consecration of this beautiful church, the corner stone of which was laid on the 6th of January, 1827, took place on the 9th of October, (1837). The building is of stone and is 124 feet long and 64 wide. The front is of dressed stone, as well as the two towers at the corners. Over the door is an inscription in letters of gold, 'The Lord is in His holy Temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.' The whole front is a lasting memorial of the devotedness and perseverance of the venerable Angelo Oliva, one of the Brothers of the Congregation of the Missions, who died about two years ago. Although occupied alone in cutting the stone for this church and superintending its erection, this excellent man found time to contribute a considerable portion of his labour to the churches of St. Louis and St. Genevieve.

The interior of the church is of the Tuscan Order. The grand altar at the extremity is of stone, elegantly painted in representation of green

---

<sup>6</sup> Rosati's Diary, March 4, 1836.

marble, the mouldings and front being beautifully gilt. At each side of the nave are three altars, one larger in the centre chapel and two smaller ones adjoining it. The sanctuary is 30 feet square under a dome 45 feet in height; there is a small gallery on each side of the sanctuary, in one of which is the organ, and a large one over the principal entrance of the church. Two capacious sacristies are entered from the sanctuary by lateral doors.

The consecration commenced at 7 o'clock in the morning. After the blessing of the exterior, the Bishop and his numerous clergy entered the church and, the doors being closed and the people excluded during a considerable portion of the ceremony, one of the Reverend Gentlemen explained the ceremonies before the grand entrance. He entered into a minute detail of the rites they had assembled to witness, and concluded by vindicating the use of ceremonies, in general, and proving the antiquity of those by which churches are dedicated to Almighty God.

The Bishop and clergy then proceeded from the church to the chapel of the Seminary, to transport the relics which were to be placed in the great altar. These relics were placed in a shrine under a richly decorated canopy, and were borne upon the shoulders of four priest clad in chasubles. On returning to the church the procession with the relics passed around the Church and then entering the main door proceeded to the altar near which the relics were deposited. The venerable Bishop of Vincennes, who, at the invitation of the Superior, had come to assist at the ceremony, accompanied the procession. His delicate state of health did not permit him to be present at the commencement of the ceremony. The aged and pious, Mr. Olivier, one of the devoted pioneers of the West, and now in his 91st year, was also present, and contributed by his very appearance to inspire the assembled multitude with devotion and recollection.

After the great altar was consecrated, by our Right Rev. Bishop with all the dignity and fidelity to the Roman Pontifical for which he is distinguished, the Pontifical Mass was celebrated, and the whole concluded at about half past two. At half past four the same Right Rev. Prelate celebrated the Pontifical Vespers.

There were present on the occasion forty-one clergymen, including seventeen priests, four deacons, three subdeacons and the seminarians and novices of the Congregation of the Missions.

It is not in the language of exaggeration we speak when we say that with the exception of the consecration of the Cathedral of St. Louis, a more imposing and truly religious spectacle has not been witnessed in the Western Country. The church itself may compare with, in point of architecture, if it does not surpass, any other religious edifice in the

United States; and a visitor from our Eastern cities, if suddenly transported to it, could scarcely believe that he was in the Barrens of Missouri.''<sup>7</sup>

Father Tornatore was overjoyed at the completion of the church after a decade's hard struggle and patient waiting.<sup>8</sup> He attended two Provincial Councils at Baltimore (1843 and 1846) as theologian of Bishop Kenrick, who had a high regard for his learning and piety. He died at the Barrens February 20th, 1864, in his 81st year, and was buried in the Community Cemetery at the Barrens. Many are the relics preserved here. But the greatest treasure this church possesses is the body of the saintly Father Felix De Andreis, which was reinterred in September 1837, on the gospel side of the chapel of St. Vincent, directly beneath the pavement.

---

<sup>7</sup> St. Louis, at the time, had no Catholic paper; hence the report was sent to Cincinnati for publication.

<sup>8</sup> Father Tornatore in his transport of joy, wrote a month after to Father Ugo, in Rome: "The service lasted 7½ hours. Some 40 Ecclesiastics were present; during all the time of the function, which is beautiful and devotion-inspiring, there was singing. A large crowd of people were present, both Catholic and Protestant, and all were astonished and edified. Our church is quite piety-inspiring. No one enters, be he Catholic or Protestant, who does not feel like saying: This is truly God's house; and this is a great boon for religion and the cause of the conversion of many heretics, who never experienced in their meeting-houses such a sweetness of feeling as they experience when they come to our church and assist at the sacred functions, which, thanks be to God, are carried out there with great accuracy and devotion.'"

## CHAPTER 20

### BISHOP DU BOURG AND THE COADJUTORSHIP

The strangest and most complicated event of Bishop Du Bourg's Episcopate is the series of negotiations with Rome for the appointment of a coadjutor for the diocese of Louisiana. That the immense diocese could not be properly administered by one man, was plain to everybody concerned. Rome would, no doubt, have gladly consented to any proper appointment. But the Louisiana prelate had several minor considerations in view, and proved so vacillating a petitioner, that the Propaganda, at last, resorted to measures of its own.

The first candidate proposed by Bishop Du Bourg for episcopal honors, though not for the coadjutorship, was his old enemy, the "inimicus homo" of former days, Father Antonio de Sedella. This was early in 1819. The unhappy dissensions in the church of New Orleans, once fostered by Father Sedella, were gradually being composed.

"In order to promote and hasten such a great work," wrote the prelate to the Cardinal Prefect, "I requested Father Anthony de Sedella be elevated to the episcopal dignity with the title in partibus, as my assistant, suppressing however, the right of succession. Through this I judged that the estranged sheep might be more easily brought back to the obedience and love of their Shepherd, and that all might gradually coalesce in one mind.

"According to subsequent communications the work of pacification progresses more happily from day to day. For when Father Anthony noticed that the trustees of his church, formerly most inimical to me, were now, through the influence mainly of my very dear friend, the Reverend Mr. Martial, greatly inclined to my side, he sent me a letter, full of submissiveness and reverence, and after that showed himself intent in correcting the abuses against which I had frequently protested in vain."<sup>1</sup>

"Having, therefore, received the above mentioned profession of Father Anthony, I sent him the decree of suspension of his vicar, and he, as well as the trustees, yielded immediate obedience, and also most earnestly requested that I appoint, as soon as possible, three of my best

---

<sup>1</sup> Souvay, Dr. Charles, L., "Correspondence of Bishop Du Bourg with Propaganda," gives all the documents on the matter preserved in the Archives of the Propaganda, America Centrale, and in the Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese. The correspondence was printed in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 73, vol. III, 223, passim. l. c. vol. I, p. 194.

priests as vicars of his church, which I did: I even constituted one of them, the Reverend Mr. Joseph Moni, of Bologna, a man of lovable character and truly sacerdotal discretion, who, whilst holding for a time the place of Vicar General of New Orleans, had completely captivated the mind of Father Anthony, as his assistant with the right of succession. The peace and government of that church being thus established, I think there is nothing to prevent you offering the mitre to Father Anthony as a sign of approbation and a means of confirming him with a new bond of union. Moreover, as after such a long vacancy, after such deplorable quarrels, after so many denunciations directed against their actual bishop and even against the Roman See, the inhabitants not only do not feel the need of a bishop, but even show themselves disinclined to receiving any bishop, no one appears to me more suitable, than the Father Anthony to conciliate and gradually accustom the minds of men to the episcopal dignity and the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. The way being thus paved by him, any prudent man will, after his death, with little trouble take his place. I therefore ask you again and again that, unless it seems otherwise to Your Eminence and the Sacred Congregation, the Brief of his election as bishop in partibus, be sent.’<sup>2</sup>

In order that this appointment of a man of doubtful character do as little harm as possible, the Bishop requested, that the new Bishop should have only delegated authority in the diocese. But, as Du Bourg continues: “in this manner the danger of schism will be effectively met, yet the needs of the diocese, both present and future, will not yet be sufficiently provided for. I would not have Your Eminence forget: 1) that this diocese is the most important one of all North America, not only on account of its well-known extension, running, as it does three thousand miles in length, but also on account of the multitude of Catholics, who compose by far the greater number of inhabitants; 2) that the religious condition has greatly deteriorated through the long interruption of the episcopal succession, the paucity of priests, and what is even worse, the bad example of many, and other local circumstances. Its extension brings it about that, with my increasing infirmities, I cannot without greatest detriment to my salvation, and danger to my life, visit the more remote parts of my diocese. And therefore a great number of the faithful are deprived of Confirmation, the priests lack the supervision and counsel of their bishop; the old abuses continue, and new ones spring up every day. And if the hope of a coming better age has already risen, and as the work of reform is just beginning, it will certainly be levelled to the ground once more, if the exercise of episcopal solicitude should cease for a few months.”<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Souvay, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 194.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 195.

“Neither of these will be remedied by the promotion of Father Anthony; for he would neither, on account of his advanced age, be able to go out beyond the limits of the city, nor would he, on account of his deficiency of learning and the sad memories of the past, be able to administer the diocese. It would, therefore, be expedient in my judgment that, besides him, another be given me as a real coadjutor, with the right of succession, who being endowed with virtue, learning, and vigor of mind and body, might be capable, not only of assisting my weakness, but also of seizing the reins of Government in case I should be prematurely taken away. I fear, indeed, that my supplication may seem exorbitant to the Sacred Congregation, as the case of two titular bishops being given to help one ordinary, if there be any at all, must be very rare indeed. But I would ask the Most Eminent Fathers to consider that to extraordinary evils extraordinary remedies are usually applied.”

“If the Sacred Congregation should accept my judgment, no one would appear more worthy to receive this sacred dignity, than the Reverend D. Joseph Rosati, a Neapolitan, a most distinguished priest of the Congregation of the Missions, about thirty years of age. He is wanting in nothing that would enable him to gain the reverence and the love of all: Virtue, especially prudence beyond his age, copious learning, a burning zeal for souls, resourceful eloquence, singular modesty, a venerable gravity of appearance, and an untiring strength of body. But as it is to be feared that he might, through his great lack of confidence in himself, refuse the proffered honor, I believe that force should be applied to his modesty and the command should be added to the appointment so, that all occasions for dangerous procrastination might be removed.”<sup>4</sup>

The Bishop quickly realized that he had made a serious blunder in requesting the appointment of Father Sedella, and hastened to retract it. But this was a difficult and dangerous matter, as it had been bruited about in New Orleans that the request for Sedella’s appointment had been urged at Rome.

“The only means I can think of to settle matters,” writes the Bishop in his anguish to the Cardinal Prefect, “is that Your Eminence oppose in the Sacred Congregation this appointment on account of the age of the person, and have an official letter sent me with the remark that, no matter how great the merit of this religious might be, his advanced age would preclude the hope of his surviving me, and the expectation of his being of assistance to me in my travels; that, therefore, it would be against the spirit of the Church to appoint him as my

---

<sup>4</sup> Souvay, *op. cit.*, pp. 195 and 196.

coadjutor; furthermore, that the partition of my diocese would be a premature measure.”<sup>5</sup>

“In consequence it will be advisable to postpone, for a time, the appointment of Rev. Mr. Rosati, whom I have already proposed for the Coadjutorship and, above all, not to mention it in the aforesaid letter. I ask Your Eminence’s pardon for my inconsistency, and my precipitation in such an important affair. But I beseech you by the love of religion to support my views, if you take any interest in the progress of the faith in this poor country, and in the consolation of this poor bishop, whom his sorrows, would long since have brought to the grave, had not God sustained him.”<sup>6</sup>

The friends and supporters of Bishop Du Bourg, hearing of his precipitate action, were surprised and hurt. Father Rosati was their choice, and Sedella’s candidacy was regarded as preposterous. Father Martial, the admired of Sedella and Du Bourg alike, sums up the feelings of the clergy in Lower Louisiana in a letter to a friend at the French Embassy in Rome; “It is likewise necessary that they should know in Rome that the wish of all the Missionaries in Louisiana is that Father Rosati be made Coadjutor: his wisdom, enlightenment, virtues and prudence fit him pre-eminently for that office. What a disregard of all proprieties, not to say more, in presenting at one time Father Anthony, a Capuchin Monk, Rector of the Church in New Orleans, and a man who caused so much disturbance, and whose wily polity succeeded in keeping away the lawful Ecclesiastical Superior.”<sup>7</sup>

On June 25th, Bishop Du Bourg proposed to Cardinal Litta another solution of the whole matter: “I asked Your Eminence to lock up this whole affair in your bosom, to let no one near or far suspect that I withdrew my petition, and to command me to designate another subject who would be younger and more active. I had, however, already proposed one in the person of Mr. Rosati to be my veritable Coadjutor, not imagining that I would ever think of giving that title to Father Anthony. But I have just received news which changes once more all my batteries and at last opens to me a door of escape from this labyrinth, whilst securing the welfare of the diocese. For five years I had at New Orleans, in the person of Mr. Sibourd, a vicar general who, by his prudence and great virtues, won the esteem of all, even of my enemies. The fortitude with which he devoted himself to his dangerous and disagreeable post, his many qualities which enabled him to fill it well, induced me at an early date to take him in consideration as my Coadjutor, when God, who, to try us, seems to play with our apparently best concerted plans, sent him an illness which forced him

---

<sup>5</sup> Souvay, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 302.

<sup>7</sup> Souvay, *op. cit.*, p. 302. Note 5.

to leave the country without hope of return. Now since the Good God has made the worthy man well and, against all expectations, even his own, has led him back to us under these painful circumstances, I have no doubt, but that he is the person upon whom He wants this dignity to fall. He is more fit for it than anyone else, by his age, which is equally distant from the two extremes, as well as by his experience, and his long services in the administration, as also by the general esteem and consideration by which he is surrounded; I therefore write to the Sacred Congregation a Latin Letter (which I ask Your Eminence to read with particular attention) in which, whilst keeping absolute silence about Father Anthony, I ask to substitute Mr. Sibourd for Mr. Rosati. I beg Your Eminence, in conformity with my last letter, to address to me a communication which I may show, written by Yourself, from which it appears that I have made a petition for this Religious, but that His Holiness, on account of the great age of the subject, has not thought proper to grant it, and that, to avoid delay, having heard from the Sacred Congregation of the merits of my Vicar General Mr. Sibourd, He has designed, *Motu proprio*, to confer upon him the dignity which I had solicited for Father Anthony.”<sup>8</sup>

On June 25th, Bishop Du Bourg returns to the charge in favor of Father Sibourd as his coadjutor, giving a reason also for his withdrawal of the name of Father Rosati: Alluding to his former letters to Propaganda the Bishop writes: “I presumed to designate the Reverend Joseph Rosati, a priest of the Congregation of the Missions, in whom I said nothing is wanting, except, possibly the proper age, to bear worthily this formidable burden. However, I should not have brought him forth, if I had had the least hope, that my Vicar-General, Rev. Louis Sibourd who, suffering from some illness a few months since, was forced to leave New Orleans for foreign parts, should ever return. For I have no priest to whom I am bound by a stronger claim; I know none, who enjoys among all, the laity as well as the clergy, a higher esteem for prudence and holiness of life, and who has acquired a fuller knowledge of the diocese.

“As he now, against the expectation of all, has returned well and strong, with the intention of remaining in New Orleans until his end, I would recall the former designation, and ask most humbly, that the above-mentioned Rev. Louis Sibourd, a priest of the diocese of Embrun, later parish priest in the Island of San Domingo, and during the last five years Vicar General of this diocese, a man, though burdened with a number of years, yet not too far advanced in age, nor broken by infirmities, be given to me as Coadjutor, with the right of succession. To the other things that speak for him, this fact may be added, a fact making his appointment so desirable in the present state of the diocese,

---

<sup>8</sup> Souvay, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

namely that he enjoys sufficient income, to serve almost at his own expense. Lastly, that the Rev. Joseph Rosati, whose Congregation is not yet firmly established in the diocese, cannot without grave detriment be separated from it so soon, as he is the main-stay thereof.”<sup>9</sup>

Being asked by the Congregation of the Propaganda to propose some other priest, not older than himself, besides Vicar General Louis Sibourd, Bishop Du Bourg submitted the names of Fathers Bertrand Martial from Bordeaux, and Joseph Rosati, both men of genuine piety, remarkable power of mind and manners. But, “as the Rev. B. Martial and the Rev. J. Rosati have undertaken under my auspices, the one the foundation of a college for the religious and literary education of boys in Lower Louisiana, and the other that of an Ecclesiastical Seminary in Upper Louisiana, these works which are, I shall not say very useful, but really necessary above all others, will fatally crumble down, if these two gentlemen are taken away. There remains, therefore, but one candidate to whom the Coadjutorship may be given without grave inconvenience, namely, the Rev. Louis Sibourd. The fact that he is a few years my senior does not seem really to be in the way: first, because his vigor and his virtue are in proportion to his years; secondly and mainly, because, as the principal reason for giving me a Coadjutor is that the minds in Lower Louisiana may gradually grow reconciled with the government of the Bishop, it is of the utmost importance to select a man with whom they are already quite accustomed.”<sup>10</sup>

As the age of Father Sibourd seemed to militate against his chances, Bishop Du Bourg in his next communication substituted the name of Father De Andreis for that of Sibourd adding, however, that De Andreis and Rosati were indispensable for the establishment of their community, as Martial was for the College he had founded in Lower Louisiana. When the question of dividing the diocese arose once more, the Bishop strongly disadvised such a step for the present. “Lower and Upper Louisiana are so necessary to each other, that if they be separated, the later could not get temporal, and the other spiritual help. The Episcopal mensa, and the support of the seminary are somehow supplied by Lower Louisiana; from Upper Louisiana alone can priests be supplied. Each one, therefore, needs the society of the other; hence, if a division is made, both must of necessity suffer. At some future day, perhaps it will be possible to make this division, otherwise, desirable, without such great detriment; yet it will always be profitable to proceed slowly in a matter of such importance, lest, under the specious appearance of greater utility, the strength of both parts be impaired. For the present, at any rate, it is evident that the division would be a calamity; and it

<sup>9</sup> Souvay, “*St. Louis Catholic Historical Review*,” vol. II, pp. 309-310.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. II, p. 48.

is of the utmost importance that both sections remain under the authority of only one Bishop, to whom, however, a Coadjutor should be given, to take a portion of his solicitude."<sup>11</sup>

As St. Louis was even then (1820) mentioned as a Metropolitan See, Bishop Du Bourg, gave his views on the question. "But the matter is not yet ripe for consideration," he wrote. Now, as Cardinal Fontana declined to give the Prelate his first choice, Father Sibourd, as Coadjutor, Du Bourg expresses his willingness to bear the burden alone, as long as his strength might last. In the meantime the Bishop of Louisiana felt it incumbent upon himself to visit the lower part of his diocese. On St. Mathias' Day 1821, he relates to Cardinal Fontana in triumphant tones the welcome news of his victory over all obstacles: "Your Eminence is aware, I believe, of the amount of hatred first aroused against me in this Lower Louisiana; it went so far that I could go there only at considerable risk. It will be to you, therefore, a source of great wonder to hear that, in this visitation of my Diocese, I have met, all the way to New Orleans, a practically unanimous welcome from the clergy and the people.

"This is truly the work of the Lord, and so wonderful has this change of spirit appeared, that the persons who knew the distress I was in, can scarcely believe their eyes when they behold the consolations with which the all-merciful God gladdens my soul. Among those who exhibited the greatest signs of joy and reverence at my coming, one of the most conspicuous was the Rev. Father Anthony De Sedella, the very same man who, in former times, I know not why, was most hostile to me. Words are unavailing to describe the honors with which he welcomed me, and I would dare say that there is no one more in harmony with me, no one to whom genuine affection prompts to more solicitude in my behalf. This example has given the tone to the whole city, so that I was not afraid to celebrate publicly a Synod in that same city where a year ago, merely to show myself would have meant extreme danger.

"This Synod was made up of some twenty priests from Lower Louisiana. All manifested in unison both their obedience to me and their zeal for the maintenance of Ecclesiastical discipline. It afforded me likewise much consolation to see the change in morals and the increase of piety which, thanks to the labors of my brother-priests, has been effected in almost every parish within so short a space of time.

"As to the rest, the S. Congregation will be made fully cognizant of it by the Rev. Angelo Inglesi, a native of Rome whom I mentioned in my preceding letter. I would not hesitate to ask him for my Coadjutor were it not proper, according to my judgment, to wait a few years, until he is more fully appreciated by his brother-priests.

---

<sup>11</sup> Souvay, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 131.

However, permit me, My Lord, to give you this hint of my wish, so that in case I should depart this life before this wish is fulfilled. Your Eminence may know that I deem no one to be more acceptable as my successor. I am glad that the present occasion is offered Your Eminence and the other Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation to know him and bring about the fulfilment of my desires."<sup>12</sup>

The first mention of Angelo Inglesi by Bishop Du Bourg is found in his letter of October 4th, 1819, to Father Simon Bruté, in which he is styled a "Roman Count," an acquisition of the first order, and a man who had made his studies for the priesthood, and lacked but the final touches. On October 8th, he sings the praises of Inglesi to Father Rosati. On March 20, 1820, he ordains Inglesi and in May, 1820, he sends him to Rome as his personal representative.<sup>13</sup>

On the death of Father De Andreis, October 1820, Bishop Du Bourg proposed to appoint Father Rosati his Vicar-General, "sans reserves," But the episcopal visitation in Lower Louisiana has once more forced upon his consideration the appointment of a coadjutor. If he gets no help, all may be lost. He now realizes that an old man will not do. He makes no complaint that Propaganda refused to give him Sedella and Sibourd, both old men, "But then it remains to me to choose from among the younger clergy one who, by the maturity of his judgment, his sincere devotion and his other remarkable qualifications, may make up what he lacks in years.

Such a one, unless affection misleads me, I have found in the person of my most beloved son, the Rev. Angelo Inglesi, whom Divine Providence has placed by my side to be to me a comforter in my sorrows and the staff of my coming old age. To tell plainly the truth, never did I have anyone so congenial to me, and who ever showed greater affection for me and greater solicitude for my flock. This solicitude it was which, when he saw me destitute of almost every means either of supporting myself, or of promoting the interest of our missions, led him to Europe, in order that both with his own fortune, which is not small, and with the offerings that he would beg from the faithful he might supply our want, and recruit a new band of laborers that we are so much in need of. For this reason I do not hesitate to salute him from afar as the chief founder of the Diocese. I believe that Your Eminence is aware of the journeys he has already undertaken for that purpose, of how worthily he has acquitted himself of his mission, and of the honors bestowed upon him everywhere, even by the greatest princes and

---

<sup>12</sup> Souvay, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 134 and 135.

<sup>13</sup> Msgr. Holweck has given a very interesting though saddening account of Angelo Inglesi in the "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. V, pp. 14-39. The so-called "Montmorency Loan," one of Inglesi's transactions, is treated by Dr. Souvay in the same Review, vol. II, pp. 199-203.

the potentates of various countries. All this evinces certainly a prudence beyond his age and leaves no doubt that this new Timothy will so conduct himself in the Episcopate that no one shall despise his youth. Why should not, therefore, this satisfaction be given, not only to my own wishes, but also to those of the whole clergy and people of Louisiana, who unanimously desire him for Coadjutor and successor."<sup>14</sup>

In Bishop Du Bourg's fervid imagination, Inglesi is the *Novus Timotheus*; he is received by princes and nobles, he deserves the title of the *praecepius dioceseos fundator*. On July 16th, 1822, he praises Inglesi for sending a small band of missionaries, and on September 16th, he writes to Rosati, that he has reserved Ste. Genevieve that had become vacant through the death of Father Henri Pratte, for his beloved Angelo. On the same day he receives the first inkling of Inglesi's scandalous conduct in Rome. How pitiful this whole episode! Bishop Du Bourg would not act rashly. Yet, as the hasty ordination of Inglesi was in conflict with the Constitution "Speculatores" of Innocent XII, November 4th, 1694, enacting "that no Bishop can lawfully raise anyone not his own subject to Sacred Orders, unless the candidate has established there his domicile for at least ten years, and affirmed under oath that he has truly the intention of remaining there; bringing testimonial letters from the Ordinary of the place of his birth," Bishop Du Bourg had incurred suspension, ipso facto, for one year, from conferring Orders. He was so notified by Cardinal Fontana in the name of the Sacred Congregation, who, however added "As their Eminences are fully convinced that Your Lordship broke the Apostolic Constitution in good faith, and not out of contempt, they were of opinion that the Holy Father, should be beseeched to deign absolve from the afore-mentioned penalties, by his Apostolic authority, insofar as needs be, both Your Lordship and those who were thus ordained by you. The Holy Father, in the audience granted to the undersigned Secretary of the 15th inst., kindly acceded to the request of the S. Congregation. I wish, however, to warn Your Lordship and all the other Prelates of the United States, that they should henceforth conform in every point with the above mentioned Constitution."<sup>15</sup>

The division of the diocese, and the erection of St. Louis into an episcopal See, was again broached by Cardinal Fontana: Bishop Du Bourg answers on February 8th, 1822: "As to the erection of another See in the City of St. Louis, Missouri, no one certainly can be pleased with it and desire it more than myself, as it means for me relief from immense labors and cares. Still, there is one reason why I delay asking at once for it, namely, the most earnest desire I have to free from all debts and obligations certain quite extensive properties which I have

<sup>14</sup> Souvay, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 139 and 140.

<sup>15</sup> Souvay, op. cit., vol. II, p. 146.

bought as an endowment for that See: I trust that, God helping, I may within a year reach this happy goal. When this is accomplished I shall most gladly resign this part of my solicitude into the hands of the Sovereign Pontiff, hesitating at no sacrifice, in order that the Prelate who is appointed to this new See may be spared the temporal cares and the utmost destitution which were my lot for several years."<sup>16</sup>

Early in 1822 Bishop Du Bourg received from the Holy See the magnificent sum of four thousand Roman scudi as a contribution to the support of the diocese of Louisiana.<sup>17</sup> But Father Inglesi was active among the Roman nobles, and promised to send even larger sums. Bishop Du Bourg defended him in a letter to Cardinal Consalvi, Pro-Prefect of the Sacred Congregation, submitting a letter of a certain Mrs. Perret. The Cardinal answered:

"I have received copy of a letter supposed to be written by the Perret woman to Father Inglesi; but even if the latter would try to justify himself of the grave misdemeanor which is imputed to him (right or wrong, I know not), still, he exhibited other signs of levity and impropriety, both by taking part in dances and by a mode of dress in no way befitting an Ecclesiastic. For this cause, clever and most skillful in business though he be, yet I do not wish that your high estimate of him should dispense you from watching and from carefully investigating his character."<sup>18</sup>

"I am confident," wrote Bishop Du Bourg to Father Martial, "that Father Inglesi is entirely justified." He evidently disbelieved the report. At any rate, writing to Father Rosati on Easter Sunday (April 7), 1822, he spoke of Inglesi in the following terms: "Father Inglesi will bring us recruits. He is not a Bishop, neither does he wish to hear of it. He was sorry to have written to me a certain letter which I communicated to you. He announces, he will be here about the beginning of the year (1823). I cannot tire of admiring his devotedness and zeal. But as you may imagine, this disappointment causes me some uneasiness. But it matters not! God knows what is best. We ought not to lose courage."<sup>19</sup> Four months later, and certainly after he had received Cardinal Consalvi's letter, speaking of the unecclesiastical behavior of Inglesi, and recommending watchfulness, Du Bourg's enthusiasm had not yet abated. On August 7, he wrote to Father Rosati: "Good news! Five or six subjects have just arrived from France for the Seminary. One of them is Subdeacon, the other have Minor Orders. There is, moreover, a Deacon, who, I believe, is ready for Ordination. . . This reinforcement

<sup>16</sup> Souvay, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 150.

<sup>17</sup> Cardinal Consalvi to Du Bourg, original in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese."

<sup>18</sup> Souvay, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 212 and 273.

<sup>19</sup> Souvay, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 212, note.

which has just come to us from Europe is but the forerunner of another including four or five, perhaps even ten, priests. You understand that it is the indefatigable Father Inglesi who is sending them to me. I expect him towards the end of this year."<sup>20</sup> The following month (September 6) very much the same note is sounded. "I am in a quandary in regard to St. Genevieve" (it was only a few days after the death of Father Pratte). "The thought came to my mind to keep that place for Father Inglesi. I have strong reasons for so doing."

Inglesi was a man of extraordinary gifts and graces, chief among them his power of captivating those with whom he came in contact. He was received at the Courts of Versailles, Naples, Lucca, Parma, Piacenza and Turin. He sent a number of excellent missionaries to Louisiana, among them such a remarkable man as John Mary Odin. According to his own report, published in Europe, he received the following sums, in virtue of his commission from Bishop Du Bourg:

From the King of France .....	4,000	Frances
The King of Holland .....	1,085	Frances
The Emperor of Russia .....	20,000	Frances
The Emperor of Austria .....	20,000	Frances
His Holiness the Pope .....	20,400	Frances
The Duchess of Tuscany .....	11,474	Frances
The Duchess of Lucca .....	5,100	Frances
The King of Sardinia .....	5,000	Frances
Sundry Individuals .....	29,192	Frances

---

116,251 Frances

Deducting the expenses and the sums required to fit out the missionaries from France, there remained a balance of 95,051 francs, which Mr. Inglesi has remitted to Bishop Du Bourg, and he publicly appeals to him for the correctness of this statement.<sup>21</sup>

The Roman authorities, however, had full proof of Inglesi's scandalous conduct and expelled him from the city. Cardinal Consalvi wrote to Bishop Du Bourg on April 27th, 1822. "In regard to the Rev. Angelo Inglesi, I reckon you are now in possession of the letter of this S. Congregation in date of September 22nd, last, in which we informed you of his improper demeanor in Rome; hence you must no longer be thinking of his promotion. One thing in this connection vexes me very sorely, namely that we heard from New Orleans, that as the rumor was spread there that Your Lordship wanted him as Coadjutor, a great deal of trouble arose throughout Louisiana, and all the missionaries

<sup>20</sup> Souvay, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 212.

<sup>21</sup> Souvay, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 215.

were so downhearted that some left the Diocese, while others, forgetful of their former zeal and solicitude, became slack and careless in the discharge of their duties. Wherefore I earnestly beg you in the Lord to do everything in your power to suppress that evil rumor, and to recall the clergy to their duty, in order that what you have built up with so much pain and care may not, on this account, fall in ruin.”<sup>22</sup> The fears of Cardinal Consalvi were not without foundation. Father Martial reports. “The opposition which manifested itself at the time when it became known he (Bishop Du Bourg) wished to have Father Inglesi for coadjutor rent his soul asunder to such an extent that he fulminated a Circular Letter to frighten the priests; but he was very sorry for it when he saw the effect it had produced; clever men may sometimes make great mistakes. There remains in the heart of some missionaries a wound which will be hard to heal. I tried, but in vain, to stop some from going away; they replied to me: “One’s first duty is to save one’s self. Assure us that in exercising the ministry as we do here, we can save ourselves.”<sup>23</sup>

From Washington, where he had just made his arrangements with the Government and with the Jesuits for the missions among the northern Indians, Bishop Du Bourg gave his parting injunctions to Father Philip Borgua C.M. on the eve of his journey to Rome:

“1. For your soul, do not forget your spiritual exercises, *et in omnibus exhibe te sicut Dei ministrum*.

2. In the interest of the Mission, travel incognito, as much as you can; no public collections.

3. Bring us not priests except two or three good missionaries of your Congregation, capable to relieve Father Rosati. You know the qualifications they must have: above all a great mansuetude; no rigorism, and something attractive in their manners.

4. Make known to the Cardinal Prefect by what artifices the notorious Inglesi magnetized me, and Father De Andreis and all, both priests and lay people, who know him here. Say that I acknowledge my mistake and deplore it; and that such is the confusion and the sorrow into which this sad disclosure has plunged me, that I have been several times tempted to beseech His Holiness’ permission to retire, in order that I may bewail this fault; that the sole fear to see my Diocese lost by that request prevented me; but that if His Eminence deems it fit to relieve me of a place, of which I made myself unworthy by such a great imprudence, I am ready to resign, and will be most thankful to him.

<sup>22</sup> Souvay, op. cit., vol. II, p. 215.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, note 5.

Whoever speaks to you of this sad affair, have no hesitation to disown the wretched imposter, and to depict the sorrow wherein he has plunged me.”<sup>24</sup>

Of Angelo Inglesi's affairs from now on we have but little to say. He returned to the United States, became entangled in the scandalous Hogan schism in Philadelphia; was then shown up by the Bishop of Quebec that he had been a strolling player, and then a saloon-keeper, and was married to a Catholic woman by a Presbyterian preacher. From Philadelphia he retired to the West Indies and died at Port Au Prince, June 13, 1825, whilst ministering to the dying during an epidemic of cholera.

Bishop Du Bourg states in his letter that he had proposed his friend Simon Bruté for his coadjutor, but it is not known at what time. In regard to Fathers Sibourd and Rosetti who were repeatedly mentioned for the dignity, Bishop Du Bourg had this to say: “The former who is now advanced in years and infirm, is moreover, afflicted by a polyp of the nose, so that he has become quite incapable to stand the work of the Episcopate. As to the latter, he never had the bodily and mental qualifications fitting one for that dignity. Still less since he has become insane, a calamity which, to the extreme sorrow and annoyance of us all, occurred two years ago.”<sup>25</sup>

Propaganda thought it expedient to appoint Father Rosati Administrator of the Church in Alabama and Mississippi, with the title of Bishop (August 13, 1822) a dignity and burden which Rosati promptly declined. Rosati was now Du Bourg's only candidate for the Coadjutorship.

---

<sup>24</sup> Souvay, op. cit., vol. III, p. 123.

<sup>25</sup> Souvay, op. cit., vol. II, p. 224.

## ROSATI'S ELECTION AS COADJUTOR BISHOP

In opening his Diary of 1823, Father Rosati writes in truly lapidary style, every word pregnant with meaning: "As the Most Rev. Ambrose Marechal, Archbishop of Baltimore had, of his own accord, resigned in the hands of the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VII, all the jurisdiction which he held, and the care which he exercised over the territories of Mississippi and Alabama, the Holy Father at the request of the S. Congregation of Propaganda appointed me Vicar Apostolic of these two States, with the character and title of Bishop of the Church of Tenagra, in partibus infidelium, by an Apostolic Brief in date of August 13, 1822.

"On receiving this Brief, and other letters from the S. C. of Propaganda, dated respectively September 7th, and 13th, of the same year, together with the faculties both ordinary and extraordinary, sent on September 8th, after mature consideration, feeling that I was unable to bear such a burden, I answered the S. Congregation to deign to appoint somebody else; and, at the same time, I begged earnestly Rev. F. Baccari, Vicar General of our Congregation, the Right Rev. William Du Bourg, Bishop of New Orleans, and the Right Rev. B. J. Flaget, Bishop of Bardstown, to plead with the Sovereign Pontiff in order to deliver me from the obligation of accepting that dignity. Meanwhile, at the request of the S. Congregation, the Sovereign Pontiff, by another Brief in date of January 21, 1823, added to the aforesaid Vicariate the territory of the Floridas. This Brief, however, never reached me.

"At any rate, yielding to the joint entreaties of the Right Rev. Bishop of New Orleans, the Archbishop of Baltimore and the Bishop of Bardstown, Pius VII, always at the request of the S. Congregation, abrogated the aforesaid Briefs of August 13, 1822 and January 21, 1823, and maintaining to me the title of Bishop of Tenagra, made me Coadjutor to the Right Rev. Bishop of New Orleans, with this provision; for three years I was to discharge the office of Coadjutor with right of succession; at the end of this period the Diocese was to be divided into two: the Bishop of New Orleans would then choose whichever portion he preferred, and the administration of the other would be given to me by new Apostolic Letters to be then sent to me. I was notified of all this by a letter of the S. Congregation and a Brief dated July 14, 1823. Deterred by the advice of our Vicar General and

of the Right Rev. Bishops of New Orleans and Bardstown from resisting the will of the Sovereign Pontiff and of the S. Congregation, to the latter, by a letter of December 6, 1823, I made known my acceptance, together with my purpose of receiving Episcopal Consecration as soon as possible."<sup>1</sup>

Thus far Bishop Rosati's account of his elevation to the Episcopacy. The vexed question of the coadjutorship was now solved to the satisfaction of all; and the eventual division of the diocese was removed from the changing fancies of Monseigneur. Within three years St. Louis was to have corporate existence as a diocese under one or the other prelate. How did this solution come about? How did the influential men whose intercession for relief had been invoked by Rosati respond to his petition? We shall take up point by point, the statements made by Rosati in his Diary.

It was Archbishop Marechal of Baltimore who gave the first impetus to the whole proceeding by explaining the necessity of new Sees in the rapidly expanding Church of America. He succeeded in obtaining at least this much, that out of the two territories of Mississippi and Alabama, taken away from the jurisdiction of Baltimore, a Vicariate Apostolic was formed, to which Father Joseph Rosati was appointed with the title and dignity of Bishop. A Pontifical Brief which settled these matters was issued on August 13, 1822; the Archbishop took it along with him when he went back to America, and on reaching home sent it at once to Father Rosati."<sup>2</sup>

"This action of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda caused consternation in the circle of Father Rosati's friends. Father Rosati himself did not hesitate for a moment to decide that, as the Episcopal dignity and burden were beyond his strength, it was his duty to refuse. He wrote so much to Cardinal Consalvi, to our Vicar General, and to some others. Bishop Du Bourg, whom this opppointment threatened to deprive of a most active co-laborer, at once wrote to Rome, grounding his plea on three arguments; First, the uselessness of the recently created Vicariate, for the Catholics were few in the territory allotted to it; secondly, the inopportuneness of the erection, as there few Catholics were unable to support a Bishop; and thirdly and foremost, Father

---

<sup>1</sup> Two volumes of Bishop Rosati's Diary are preserved, the one in the Archives of Kenrick Seminary, the other in the Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese. Dr. Souvay has published a large portion of this Diary in the "*St. Louis Catholic Historical Review*," commencing in vol. IV, p. 311, and continuing in installments till vol. V, p. 88. "Our Vicar-General" is Father Baccari.

<sup>2</sup> "Life of Rosati," MS. in "Archives of Procurator of the Congregation of Mission," Rome. Quoted by Souvay in "*Catholic Historical Review*," vol. III, p. 13.

Rosati's departure would surely mean the ruin of the establishment of the Mission, which was the object of his care and solicitude, and on which so much money had been spent. It would consequently be an irretrievable loss to religion."<sup>3</sup>

The Prelate also sent the most urgent request to Father Rosati to remain firm in his refusal of the proffered honor, as his removal to the wilds of Mississippi and Alabama would certainly bring ruin on the Seminary and the diocese of Louisiana. "I pray God to direct you in your answer; but in my opinion all is lost in the whole of Louisiana, if the thing comes to effect. And, besides the damage caused to Religion, what an injustice to me! and what motive of despondency for all the Bishops! God preserve me from ever believing that this affair may be consummated! Did I believe it I would not go back to my Diocese, but I would go and tender my resignation at the feet of the Pope."<sup>4</sup>

To the Congregation of Propaganda he wrote in his old impulsive way: "It is the downfall, in all Louisiana, of the Congregation of the Mission, which, under his care was beginning to flourish nicely, and at the head of which no one, besides him, can be put for the time being. It is the downfall of our Ecclesiastical Seminary, our only hope for this immense country; and this downfall will bring about the dispersion of excellently trained priests and of the pupils, whom I had secured at so great a price. As to me, seeing my endeavors frustrated, if I do not die of sorrow, I will at least languish in despondency. Oh! Your Eminence! What have you done? Who ever prompted you to this advice to take from the poorest of Bishops the last and only anchor of his hope? I had accepted the Episcopate only on the condition that priests of the Congregation of the Mission would be given me to help me. I got only two capable to build up that Congregation in my Diocese, Father De Andreis and Father Rosati. One was taken away by death, and now you are depriving me of the other, when I have consumed immense labors and a great deal of money for the foundation of their Society. In one day are annihilated the fatigues and efforts of seven years. It is all over: if that appointment takes effect, there is nothing for me to hope, nothing to attempt. Dejected I shall sit, bemoaning the ruin of the edifice which, with the help of God, my labors had begun to erect."<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Souvay, "Rosati's Election to the Coadjutorship of New Orleans," in "Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>5</sup> Archives of Propaganda, in Souvay, "Correspondence of Bishop Du Bourg with Propaganda," in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. II, p. 221.

The Holy Father, had in the meantime, placed an additional burden on Father Rosati's shoulders, assigning the temporary care of the two Floridas to the newly appointed Vicar Apostolic.

"We, by the advice of our Ven. Brethren the Cardinals of the Congregation of Propaganda, have resolved to dismember from the Diocese of New Orleans the two Floridas and to unite and annex them provisionally to the recently created Vicariate Apostolic of the Territories of Mississippi and Alabama; and finally, it being our wish that our Ven. Brother Joseph Rosati, recently elected Vicar Apostolic with Episcopal dignity and title of the two territories of Mississippi and Alabama, should have care and jurisdiction over the two Floridas as well, with all the faculties enjoyed by the other Bishops of the United States; so, in virtue of our Apostolic authority by the tenor of the present letter we decree, this to stand, until other provision shall be made by this Holy See."<sup>6</sup>

This new decree did not reach Father Rosati, yet he learnt of its tenor, after he had taken the bold step to send back to Rome the Pontifical documents. It was Father Philip Borgna, a priest of his Community, that was commissioned by Father Rosati to carry them back to Propaganda and to do all in his power to obtain the annulment of the appointment.

Archbishop Marechal, Bishop Du Bourg and Bishop Flaget had meanwhile, carefully reviewed and sifted the whole matter, and their reports were unanimously against the erection of the new Vicariate Apostolic. These reports placed Propaganda in a rather embarrassing position. Yet the wisdom and resourcefulness of Rome is proverbial. The Cardinals quickly found a favorable way out of a difficulty to the attainment of a long-desired end. Suppressing the impossible Vicariate Propaganda fell back upon the old idea of dividing Louisiana. But, taught by experience, it carefully postponed taking measures for a period of three years, meantime appointing the Bishop-elect of Tenegra Coadjutor to the Bishop of New Orleans.

A quotation from the Brief of Pope Pius VII, dated July 14th, 1823, will be very acceptable here as being probably the last official act of the great Pope, but even more, as being the great charter of the diocese of St. Louis. Alluding to the divisions that had been made by Propaganda, the Holy Father continues: "But now a recent report of the Secretary of the same Congregation based upon a letter of the Bishop of New Orleans, has apprized us of the fact that the establishment of the above-mentioned Vicariate and the Union thereto of the

---

<sup>6</sup> Brief of January 21, 1823, in Souvay, "Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, p. 16.

Floridas made later, as well as your designation for that Vicariate are not only purposeless, owing to the small number of Catholics in the countries forming it; not only inopportune because these countries are utterly unable to support a Bishop, but also your very appointment will be a calamity for the cause of Religion in all Louisiana, for your departure from Louisiana will strike the death-blow, it is asserted, to the house of the Congregation of the Mission recently erected and working so usefully in Louisiana, and to the Ecclesiastical Seminary, and finally to the College founded for the education of young men in Religion and in the liberal arts, as you are the only person, on account of the scarcity and youth of the sacred ministers residing in those parts, who can be usefully at the head of these establishments.

Therefore, the afore-mentioned, Apostolic Letters whereby We made you Vicar Apostolic of the Territories of Mississippi and Alabama in the United States and added to it the Floridas dismembered from the Diocese of New Orleans, and elected you Vicar Apostolic, We, in virtue of the apostolic authority, by the tenor of these presents cancel and abrogate; and thus, as We had elected you Bishop of Tenegra as per our former Apostolic letter of August 13th, 1822, and as you now have possibly received already Episcopal Consecration, canceling likewise your appointment as Vicar Apostolic, We designate you to aid the Bishop of New Orleans in the administration of his Diocese in quality of his coadjutor, the following, however, being understood both by you and by that bishop: Louisiana shall be divided into two Episcopal Sees within three years; if, which may God avert! the Bishop of New Orleans should depart this life before the division be made, you shall at first take the administration of the whole of Louisiana; then when the division will be made, you shall have the government of only one of these two Sees, and the other shall be turned over to the person designated by the Apostolic See."<sup>7</sup>

Father Borgna reached Rome in the First days of November. Since leaving America on April 10th, he had had ample time to make reflections, and he had come to the conclusion that the good of religion in America imposed upon him the duty of disregarding the wishes of his Superior, and of urging strongly Father Rosati's appointment. In November 1823, Propaganda sent back to Father Rosati the Brief of August 13th, 1822, and accompanied it with a letter appealing to the appointee's sense of obedience. But he had already submitted himself to the inevitable. Both Bishop Du Bourg and Bishop Flaget made it clear to the Bishop Elect that it was his duty to resist no longer. Father Baccari also had advised acceptance. On December

---

<sup>7</sup> Brief of July 14, 1823, in *Souvay*, l. c. pp. 18 and 19.

6th, Father Rosati wrote to his brother Nicola: "I wrote to you some time ago that last year I had been elected Vicar Apostolic and Bishop of Tenegra (in partibus); I refused to accept. My refusal has been taken into consideration in so far as the Vicariate Apostolic is concerned; but instead I have been elected Coadjutor to Bishop Du Bourg. I confess to you that that burden affrights me. But I find myself in the necessity of refusing no longer, as this was made to me a grave duty of conscience by our Bishop and by others whom I consulted. I must therefore submit."<sup>8</sup>

"However, as I had sent back to Rome the Apostolic Letter of August 13, 1822, the S. Congregation returned it to me, adding a new letter, dated November 22, 1823, commanding me to obey the will of the Apostolic See. In compliance with these orders of the Holy See, and receiving from the Bishop of New Orleans letters advising me of the place in Lower Louisiana where the Consecration was to be, and of the most convenient time for that ceremony, I made my preparations for the journey. Accordingly I started from the Seminary for Ste. Genevieve as winter was at its fiercest. Received there most amiably by Father F. X. Dahmen, priest of our Congregation, and Rector of that Church, I stayed with him waiting for a boat. On the Sunday, (February 1st) preached at high Mass to the people.

Septuagesima Sunday (February 8th) preached at high Mass to the people.

Sexagesima Sunday; preached at high Mass to the people.

Quinquagesima Sunday: celebrating Mass early in the morning, went on board, and we left Ste. Genevieve.

"Until the mouth of the Ohio, river trip quite difficult, owing to the low stage of the water. Five times we struck sand bars, so that it was only after twelve days, that is, on March 4, that we reached there. The remainder of the journey we made most rapidly, for the Ohio, brimful of water, bringing to the Mississippi its most generous tribute, permitted the latter to carry the largest vessels; accordingly in three days we made Natchez, and the following day late at night I left the boat and landed near Donaldsonville. There for two days I enjoyed the hospitality of Father Brassac, welcomed Father Acquaroni, who came to see me; and, accompanied by Father Brassac, went over to see the Bishop at the house of his nephew nine miles from the Church of the Ascension on the left side of the river; we welcomed him just as he was coming back from New Orleans. Two days I enjoyed there his company and conversation, and accompanied by him I came back to Donaldsonville. The next day, after the divine service, Father Brassac took me over to the Parish of the Assumption; there, as the guest of the

<sup>8</sup> Rosati to his brother Nicola, December 6, 1823, in Souvay, l. cit., p. 20.

Pastor, Father Bigeschi, I made a few days retreat, after which Fathers Bigeschi, Tichitoli and myself set off for Father Bernard de Deva's, where we remained over night; the following day we reached St. Joseph's where we spent the rest of that day and the night with Fathers Potini and Rosti, priests of our Congregation who have charge of that Parish. The next day after Mass we went back to Father Bernard's and remained with him until the following day, being detained by rain. After dinner we came to the Assumption and finally to Donaldsonville, where I found the Rt. Rev. Bishop of New Orleans and most of those who had been invited to the Consecration. Everything in the church was in readiness; the joyous peal of the church bell, the roar of the mortar, the sound of innumerable pipes, first from the houses near the church, then from every other house inside and even outside the Parish of the Ascension heralded to all the faithful the morrow's celebration.

“Accordingly, on the day devoted to commemorate the Lord's Incarnation, in the church of the Ascension at Donaldsonville, amidst a great concourse of people, the following pastors and members of the clergy of the Diocese being in attendance: Revs. Bernard Deva, former pastor of the Assumption; Joseph Bigeschi, present rector of the same parish; Charles De la Croix, pastor of St. Michael's; Anduze, of St. James'; Brassac, of the Ascension; Potini, of St. Joseph's; Rosti and Tichitoli, priests of the Congregation of the Mission; Millet, pastor of St. Charles; Peyretti, Janvier; Mr. Hermant, a cleric; the Very Rev. L. Sibourd, Vicar-General, and Father Anthony de Sedella, O. M. C., fulfilling by dispensation the office of Assistant Consecrators. I was anointed and consecrated by the Right Rev. Louis William Du Bourg; Father Anduze preached the sermon.

Assisted at the High Mass, after which I administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to five persons.”<sup>9</sup>

After the consecration in the Church of The Ascension, Donaldsonville, Bishop Rosati made a round of visits to his old and new friends in Lower Louisiana. His first visit was to Father Francis Cellini, then residing in the Parish of St. Charles of Opelousas. Father Hercules Brassac accompanied him. Travelling partly by boat, partly on horseback, they reached their destination, the house of Madam Mary Smith, where Father Cellini and Rosti were staying on April 1st. On the next morning the Bishop visited the Convent of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, erected there under the auspices of Madam Smith, and said Mass, and gave the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament to the Nuns and to thirty girls who were educated there.

---

<sup>9</sup> Rosati's Diary.

The next two days Rosati said Mass in the same place, and preached to the Nuns and the girls.

After Mass said at an early hour, he was taken back to the boat by Father Cellini; and going on board, the party sailed through the Bayous, the next day; thence in a carriage they came about night fall to the Mississippi river; the next day they reached Donaldsonville where Father Rosti was waiting for them.

On the 9th, the Bishop took a boat to carry him down the river, and at halfpast six he landed in New Orleans. From the boat he went straightway to the Bishop's residence, and remained there. He said Mass in the Church of the Ursulines, after which he paid a visit to their Superior and to Father Anthony; and saw at the Bishop's residence all the priests living in the city, namely, Father Sibour, Moni, Jeanjean, Richard, Acquaroni, Portier, Janvier, Michaud, and Bertrand. On Palm Sunday, he said Mass early in the morning in the church of the Nuns; and, later on, in the cathedral, before the solemn Mass, he blessed and distributed the Palms and was present at the procession and solemn Mass.

On Maundy Thursday, he celebrated pontifical Mass in the church of the Nuns, to whom he gave Holy Communion. He assisted at the solemn Mass and the solemn Consecration of the Oils by the Bishop of New Orleans in the Cathedral, also at the office of Tenebrae.

On Good Friday, he celebrated the service solemnly in the church of the Nuns, and at the cathedral attended the office of Tenebrae, after which he went to visit the tomb of Father Ferrari, priest of the Congregation. On Easter Sunday, Celebrated solemn pontifical Mass in the Cathedral; during Mass the right Rev. Bishop Du Bourg, preached the sermon from the communion rail, assisted at Vespers in the same place.

On May 10th, the Coadjutor Bishop finally sailed on the *Dolphin*: his companions were Father Potini and the Seminarian Hermant. After ten days the boat landed at Bois-Brule, twelve miles from the Seminary. Here the student disembarked, whilst the Bishop and Father Potini continued the journey to St. Louis, arriving there on May 20th. After a brief rest at the Cathedral in company of Father Niel, Audizio and Saulnier the Bishop set out for St. Ferdinand to visit the Novitiate of the Jesuits under Father Van Quickenborne and the Convent of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart and Mother Duchesne. The next morning the Bishop returned to St. Louis where he had a long conversation with General William Clark, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the West, about the Indian Missions. From St. Louis the Bishop started back to the Seminary. The good people of the Barrens wished to give the returning Father and Shepherd a loud and hearty welcome,

and had sent Mr. Paquin to Ste. Genevieve, to give them timely warning of the Prelate's approach. The Bishop forbade the young man to carry out the plan. Hence the people had no chance of giving the Bishop a solemn reception on his home coming.<sup>10</sup>

"I shall continue to reside at the Seminary and to live in one Community, teaching my classes," wrote Bishop Rosati to Propaganda on accepting the Episcopacy, as it had been stipulated by Father Baccari, as well as by Bishop Du Bourg. The former wrote:

"By virtue of an agreement entered into with Propaganda, you must remain Superior of the house and Seminary over there, and head of the whole Mission in America, with the ordinary powers of Visitor, or even of Vicar General, for all cases where there is no time to write to Rome and wait for an answer; and therefore you are empowered to appoint confreres to rule the houses with the title of Vicar-Superiors."<sup>11</sup>

The latter had written to Propaganda: "In a former letter I asked that Father Bruté, a Sulpician priest of the highest merit, be given me for Coadjutor, as I was afraid that if Father Rosati were appointed he would be taken away from the superiorship of his Society. But now that he has already been designated for the Episcopate, I ask that he be given the preference over Father Bruté for the Coadjutorship, and may continue at the same time to be Superior of his Congregation until some one else may take his place in this office. This is an easy way of reconciling every interest. Father Rosati, residing in Upper Louisiana, where are the headquarters of his Congregation and the Seminary, will administer, in my name, with Episcopal authority, the portion of the Diocese, while at the same time he will foster the progress of the infant Society. I, on the other hand, shall principally take care of Lower Louisiana, and continue to provide for the little flock in Mississippi; finally, the Catholics of Alabama and Florida will have their own Bishop."<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Diary.

<sup>11</sup> Souvay, "Rosati's Elevation to the See of St. Louis," l. cit., p. 171.

<sup>12</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese, cf. Souvay, "Correspondence of Du Bourg with Propaganda," l. cit., vol. II, p. 223.

## LINKING OLD AND NEW

The appointment of Rosati as Coadjutor Bishop with residence in the northern part of the diocese of Louisiana, established St. Louis an episcopal See, *de facto*, though not as yet *de jure*. By Bishop Du Bourg's consent Bishop Rosati exercised full jurisdiction in Missouri, Arkansas, Western Illinois, and all the territory to the North and West. Within three years this arrangement was to become permanent, *de jure* also; St. Louis with the surrounding territory was to become a separate diocese with Joseph Rosati as its first Bishop. It seems proper, therefore, at this juncture, to link up the new regime that Bishop Du Bourg had initiated, and Bishop Rosati was to continue and extend, with the remnants of the old regimes of the French Jesuits and the Spanish Monks, that survived the period of change and disaster.

There were the ancient parishes on the east bank of the Mississippi, Cahokia, Kaskaskia, Prairie du Rocher in Illinois; the Post of Arkansas, the former Parish of New Madrid, Ste. Genevieve, then Father Dunand's stations in Perry County, the Catholic villages of St. Michael's, Old Mines, Potosi, Little Canada; then the old Catholic towns on the Missouri River, St. Charles, St. Ferdinand with Dardenne and Portage des Sioux, and lastly St. Louis itself with Carondelet as a dependency. The numerous recruits brought from overseas by Bishop Du Bourg and his supporters were, of course, distributed over all Louisiana, Upper and Lower as well.

Father Felix De Andreis, the first and foremost member of the new clergy, was stationed at the Pro-Cathedral in St. Louis, where Bishop Du Bourg also had his residence. Father De Andreis was retained as Vicar-General, Superior of the Lazarists and Pastor of the Cathedral until his holy death. It was in the primitive parsonage of Father Bernard de Limpach on Church St., now Second, between Market and Walnut, that the Servant of God spent the last years of his life. It was here that he established the first novitiate of his Congregation with Father Ferrari and M. M. Tichitoli and Dahmen as novices. Father De Andreis' successor as pastor of the Cathedral, and President of the College established under his auspices, was the Rev. Francis Niel, with Leo Deys and A. B. Anduze as assistants, and Edmund Saulnier, then but a student, as teacher of languages.

The Rev. Aristide Anduze, a native of the diocese of Rennes, in France, came to Missouri in the summer of 1820, after making his

theological studies at Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, and was raised to the priesthood in November 1821. After teaching a while at the College of St. Louis, Father Anduze was called to Lower Louisiana. He was chosen to preach the sermon on the occasion of Bishop Rosati's consecration; and a very eloquent sermon it was, as Bishop Rosati bore witness. Of the three original novices of Father De Andreis, Joseph Tichitoli, was a member of that little band of clerics who had gathered around the Milanese priest, John Mary Rosetti, and were accepted by Bishop Du Bourg, when he came to Milan in 1816. And he alone of all the band was permitted to accompany the advance guard under De Andreis; whilst the others had to wait until 1818.

Tichitoli was a native of Como. Bishop Du Bourg raised him to the priesthood on the 15th of December 1818 and sent him to Lower Louisiana. Father Rosati speaks of him as a most precious subject, full of zeal and a very able preacher both in English and in French, the proper man for giving missions."

The second member of this noble trio, Fr. Andrew Ferrari, a native of Port Maurice, was already a priest when, in 1815, he resolved with his friend, Canon Caretti, to enlist for the American mission. While in Kentucky he begged admission into the Vincentian Order, and after six months' novitiate, was sent to Vincennes, as assistant of Father Anthony Blanc, whom he succeeded as pastor in January 1820. He died in New Orleans, of the yellow fever, November 2, 1822. Father Sedella held the funeral services over the remains of his faithful assistant.

The third and last of Father de Andreis' novices was a native of Germany, the Rev. Francis Xavier Dahmen, who was born at Dueren, in the diocese of Aix-la-Chapelle, on March 23, 1789.

But of good Father Dahmen we have given a partial account in the chapter on Ste. Genevieve. We shall meet him again in a future chapter at St. Vincent's Church St. Louis.

Father Henry Pratte of Ste. Genevieve was one of the golden links that clasped the new regime to the old. He was the first native priest of Missouri, having been born in Ste. Genevieve on January 19, 1788. He made his theological studies in Montreal and, after his ordination, called upon Bishop Flaget, the Administrator, and was appointed pastor of his native city. The parish of Ste. Genevieve had been without a priest since the death of Father Maxwell, May 28th, 1814.

Kaskaskia, the glorious mother of Ste. Genevieve, but now a mere wreck of former greatness, was assigned to Father Pierre Desmoulins, who came from France to America, with Du Bourg in 1817, and journeyed to the Barrens with Father Rosati. After his ordination at Ste. Genevieve, November 1, 1818; he was appointed to Kaskaskia,

in 1819, and there opened a school. As pastor of Baton Rouge, Father Pierre Desmoulins caused much excitement by refusing to suffer masonic symbols to be united with the ceremonies of the church at a funeral. The trustees of the church applied to the Bishop of Louisiana that he might direct the curate to conform to their wishes on the subject.

In 1822 Prairie du Rocher was still attended by that grand old man, Father Donatien Olivier, then in his 73rd year, but soon to retire to the hospitable shelter of St. Mary's of the Barrens (1827). Bishop Rosati says of him: "He is a saint, who has labored for many years in the service of all the Catholics of these regions." The parish was attended from the Seminary by Father Cellini, De Neckere, Mascaroni, and from Kaskaskia by Father Paillason until 1832, when Father Vitalis Van Clostere became its pastor. Father Van Clostere came to Missouri under the auspices of Father De Neckere, in company of Peter Doutreluigne and Peter Paul Lefevere. He was, as his name indicates, a Belgian. Cahokia, the oldest town in the valley, still had its old pastor, Father Francis Savine, the last of the Canadian priests to serve the people of the Illinois. On his departure for the South, Father Peter Doutreluigne officiated at the church of the Holy Family every Sunday.

St. Ferdinand of Florissant remained in charge of the Trappist Prior, Mary Joseph Dunand, until 1820, when Father Charles De La Croix took charge. The Nuns of the Sacred Heart, on their transmigration from St. Charles, were deeply indebted to him for his paternal solicitude. Mother Duchesne's character sketch of Father De La Croix will be of interest here: "Simple as a child and valiant as a soldier, Mr. De La Croix was afraid of nothing, he dreaded neither the floods nor the depths of the forest swarming with serpents and wild beasts, nor the pathless deserts he had to travel through at night. In all dangers his shield was the sign of the cross, and he had an unbounded confidence in the Angels. On entering into any negotiations he took care, before speaking to the persons he had to treat with, to pray to their guardian angels, and experience had proved to him that this expedient always succeeded. The Bishop used to call him 'his Angel.' And he had indeed, an angelic love of God and an activity in service which made him fly whenever work was to be done for religion."<sup>1</sup>

During their stay at St. Charles, the devoted sisters had for their Director and Confessor, the very Rev. Benedict Richard, the pastor of St. Charles. Father Richard—not to be confounded with Father Gabriel Richard, pastor of Detroit—had come to Louisiana about the same time as Mother Duchesne and her companions, reaching St. Louis

---

<sup>1</sup> Erskine, "Mother Du Chesne," p. 208.

on the 20th of August 1818. He was first assigned to St. Charles, thus remaining in close contact with the Sacred Heart Nuns. Some time after the departure of the Community to Florissant Father Richard himself was transferred to Louisiana, where he was appointed chaplain of the Ursulines. During the epidemic of yellow fever in 1822, Father Richard was attacked by the disease, but "heaven" wrote Father Odin some time later, "did not wish to deprive the Mission of such a holy man."

He became Vicar-General of New Orleans under Bishop De Neckere.

St. Charles of the Little Hills on the Missouri, had been a parish under the Spanish regime, but lay forsaken until the arrival of Father Benedict Richard. He was succeeded by Father John Baptist Acquaroni, a native of Porto Maurizio, who as a priest of the Mission had joined Father De Andreis and Rosati on their journey from Rome to America. He remained in St. Thomas' Seminary, until the arrival of Bishop Du Bourg and arrived in St. Louis on April 25th, 1818. A few months later Bishop Du Bourg put him in charge of the two parishes of Portage des Sioux and La Dardenne, Mo. In October 1820 he accompanied from St. Louis to the Barrens the body of Father De Andreis. In the summer 1822 he departed for the South. "He lacks a little the polite manners which some people want to see in a priest."

The village of Carondelet, or as it was usually called, Vide Poche, with about one hundred French families, had no priest in 1825, but was later on visited by Father Edmund Saulnier. St. Michaels at Fredericktown also had no resident priest, but was attended from the Barrens until 1827, when Father Potini took charge of the parish, to be succeeded by Father Francis Cellini. In Old Mines the two hundred Catholic families had a church, but no priest. It was visited a few times a year from Ste. Genevieve. At New Madrid there was neither church nor priest in 1824: but Father Cellini went there from the Barrens about four times a year, and remained about a month at a time.

There now remains but one of the old foundations in Missouri, to be spoken of, the Barrens, having about two hundred Catholic families, and very good ones at that. They were of Anglo-American stock, and spoke only English. It was here that the Seminary was planted in 1818. In 1825, the faculty of this institution of learning was composed of Bishop Rosati and the Lazarist Fathers Leo De Neckere, Francis Collins, and Bernard Permoli, with Father John Odin and the Deacon John Timon as travelling missionaries, in Arkansas and Texas. There were fourteen ecclesiastical students at the Barrens.

Father Francis Cellini was accompanied on his voyage to America by two scholastics, Anthony Potini and Philip Borgne, both of whom

became members of the Congregation of the Mission. Father Cellini's long, and, at times, rather tempestuous life will be treated in a chapter of its own. His predecessor at St. Michaels Fredericktown deserves a brief notice here, if it were only for the trouble and grief he caused his Superior by his unpriestly conduct and his constant complaints.

Rev. Anthony Potini a native of Velletri, where he was born in 1799, entered the Congregation of the Mission at Monte Citorio, Rome, in January 1816, and was sent to America while yet a scholastic in 1818, arriving at the Barrens January 5, 1819. Ordained to the priesthood on the Sunday before the feast of All Saints 1820, he was sent during the Spring of 1821 to take charge of the parish of St. Joseph, in Lower Louisiana.

Father Philip Borgna was a man of far different character. Born at Saluzzo in Piedmont he came to America with his firends Cellini and Potini in October 1818, and arrived at the Barrens January 5, 1819. Borgna was raised to the priesthood by Bishop Du Bourg, in St. Louis, March 19, 1820. He then returned to the Seminary, but soon after was stationed at the Cathedral in New Orleans. During the cholera epidemic he vied with Father Ferrari, in his devotedness to the stricken people. He was sent to Italy in 1823 as Bishop Du Bourg's agent. He remained in Italy until the fall of 1824 and then came back to New Orleans, and after a few years was recalled to Missouri, where he became Vicar-General of the Diocese.

Father Leo De Neckere, Bishop Rosati's right hand man at the Seminary, who was destined to become Bishop of New Orleans, calls for a passing notice here.

He was born at Wevelkhem, in the diocese of Ghent, Flanders, on June 5, 1800. Being received by Bishop Du Bourg for the Louisiana Mission, he sailed from Bordeaux, with Bishop Du Bourg, arrived in Kentucky with the others and there studied theology for a year under Father Rosati; left Kentucky with Rosati for the Barrens, and thence was sent to St. Louis, where he was put to teach in the College. He was received into the Congregation of the Mission by Father De Andreis, on June 9, 1820. He went back shortly after to the Barrens, whence Bishop Du Bourg called him again to St. Louis in September. He was there when Father De Andreis died, and a few weeks later returned to the Barrens. He was ordained subdeacon in the fall of 1821, and the next year after his vows, deacon and priest.

Concerning Father Permoli we have but little to say. Born at Piacenza, Italy, on February 26, 1797, he entered the novitiate in Rome, the 25th of November 1815, he was some time later sent back to the Alberoni College in his native city, as a student. There he made his vows and was ordained in due time. When Father Borgna returned

to America in the fall of 1824, he obtained permission to take along with him Father Permoli.

The two "travelling missionaries" mentioned by Bishop Rosati in his report of 1825, in the course of time, became Bishops, John Mary Odin and John Timon, the one in the South, the other in the East.

John Mary Odin, born February 25, 1800, at Ambierle, France, arrived at the Barrens in August 1822, with five companions; he completed there his theological studies, and was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Du Bourg, May 4, 1823. Meantime (November 8, 1822) he had entered the Novitiate of the Lazarists. After his ordination he remained at the Seminary, occupied in teaching and in the care of the parish. After his short stay at Cape Girardeau, he returned to the Seminary, which he left in 1840 for the Texas Missions. He was made (March 6, 1842) Vicar Apostolic of Texas, the title being changed a few years later into that of Bishop of Galveston. In 1861 Bishop Odin was transferred to the Archbishopric of New Orleans. In 1869 he went to Rome to attend the Vatican Council but, falling sick in Rome, he left the Eternal City for his natal home in Ambierle, where he died in May 1870.

Deacon John Timon, Father Odin's companion on the missionary tour, was born at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, February 12, 1797. Having stayed six months at St. Louis at the Bishop's, was sent to the Seminary where he arrived the 19th of July 1822. He was appointed instructor in English and infirmarian. He received tonsure on October 12, 1822, and was put at the head of the catechism class in the church, was admitted to the Novitiate April 25, 1823. Father Timon eventually became Superior of the Lazarists, Vicar-General of the Diocese, and Bishop of Buffalo.<sup>2</sup>

In 1822 there appeared in New York the First Catholic Directory in the United States called "*The Laity's Directory to the Church Services. 1822.*" It is a small volume but full of important matter concerning the Church of that early date. The chapter on the Diocese of Louisiana is of special interest to us. As the booklet is a rarity we will give in full the part that refers to the diocese of St. Louis.

Bishopric of Louisiana.

Rt. Rev. Dr. William Du Bourg, Bishop.

Consecrated In Rome, Sept. 24, 1815.

This diocese includes the whole ancient Louisiana, as sold by France to the United States, together with the Floridas; The Episcopal

---

<sup>2</sup> Most of the biographical data of this chapter were selected from that rich collection of historical facts bearing on the history of Bishop Rosati and his times, made by the loving yet critical zeal of the Very Rev. Charles L. Souvay, C. M., D. D., President of Kenrick Seminary, and laid up for use in the "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," of which he was the Editor.

See was erected in 1796, when the country yet belonged to the crown of Spain.

Ancient Louisiana is now divided into the state of that name, whose capital is New-Orleans; the state of Missouri, the chief town of which is St. Louis, and the territory of Arkansas. The extent of the diocese has induced the bishop to divide his residence between New-Orleans and St. Louis, in each of which he has his Episcopal chair. In the probable event of his soon obtaining a coadjutor, the two Prelates would then settle one in each of these two extremities.

The Clerical Seminary, founded about two years ago, is in the state of Missouri, Perry county, in a settlement called Barrens. It is held by the priests of the Mission of St. Vincent of Paul, under the superiority of the Rev. Joseph Rosati. The novitiate of that venerable congregation is at present composed of six or seven members. Several priests of the same holy Institute are disseminated in parishes through the Diocese. The Seminary begins to flourish, and promises a succession of well informed and pious missionaries. Among the priests of the seminary, one is devoted to the neighboring missions as far as New Madrid.

St. Louis has a Catholic college, under the inspection of the Bishop and several clergymen, either priests or juniors, the priests are the Rev. M. M. F. Niel, Leo Deys, and A. B. Anduze, who beside their collegiate duties perform also the service of the Cathedral, and attend to other parochial functions, both in St. Louis and neighboring settlements.

The officiating clergymen in the upper part of the Diocess, besides the above named, are the Rev. Henry Pratte, in St. Genevieve, a thriving town, sixty miles south of St. Louis; the Rev. P. Desmoulins, Kaskaskias, the Rev. N. Olivier, Prairie Du Rocher; the Rev. N. Savine, Cahokias; the Rev. Charles De La Croix, St. Ferdinand; who also attends the infant missions on the Missouri: The Rev. Joseph Aquaroni, P. of the M. for St. Charles, Dardenne, and Portage des Sioux.

There are churches in all the above places, the most remarkable of which are the New Cathedral in St. Louis, a brick building 130 feet long, not yet completely finished, adorned with valuable paintings, organ and furniture; the brick church now building in St. Ferdinand, on a very handsome plan, and that of St. Genevieve.

The State of Missouri is also blessed with the institution of the Religious Ladies of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a precious colony arrived from France in 1818, established in the village of St. Ferdinand, 15 miles north of St. Louis, where they have set up a novitiate, now composed of five novices and several postulants; a thriving seminary,

the resort of the daughters of most of the wealthy inhabitants of this and adjacent states, and a day school for the girls of the poorer class.

The state of Louisiana has eighteen ecclesiastical parishes, viz, New Orleans, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, St. James, St. Michael, Ascension, Assumption, St. Joseph, St. Gabriel at Iberville, Baton Rouge, Point Coupee, St. Martin, and St. Mary, (Attacapas), St. Landry, St. Charles Borremeus (Opelousas), Avoyelles, Natchitoches, to which is to be added Natchez, in the state of Mississippi.''<sup>3</sup>

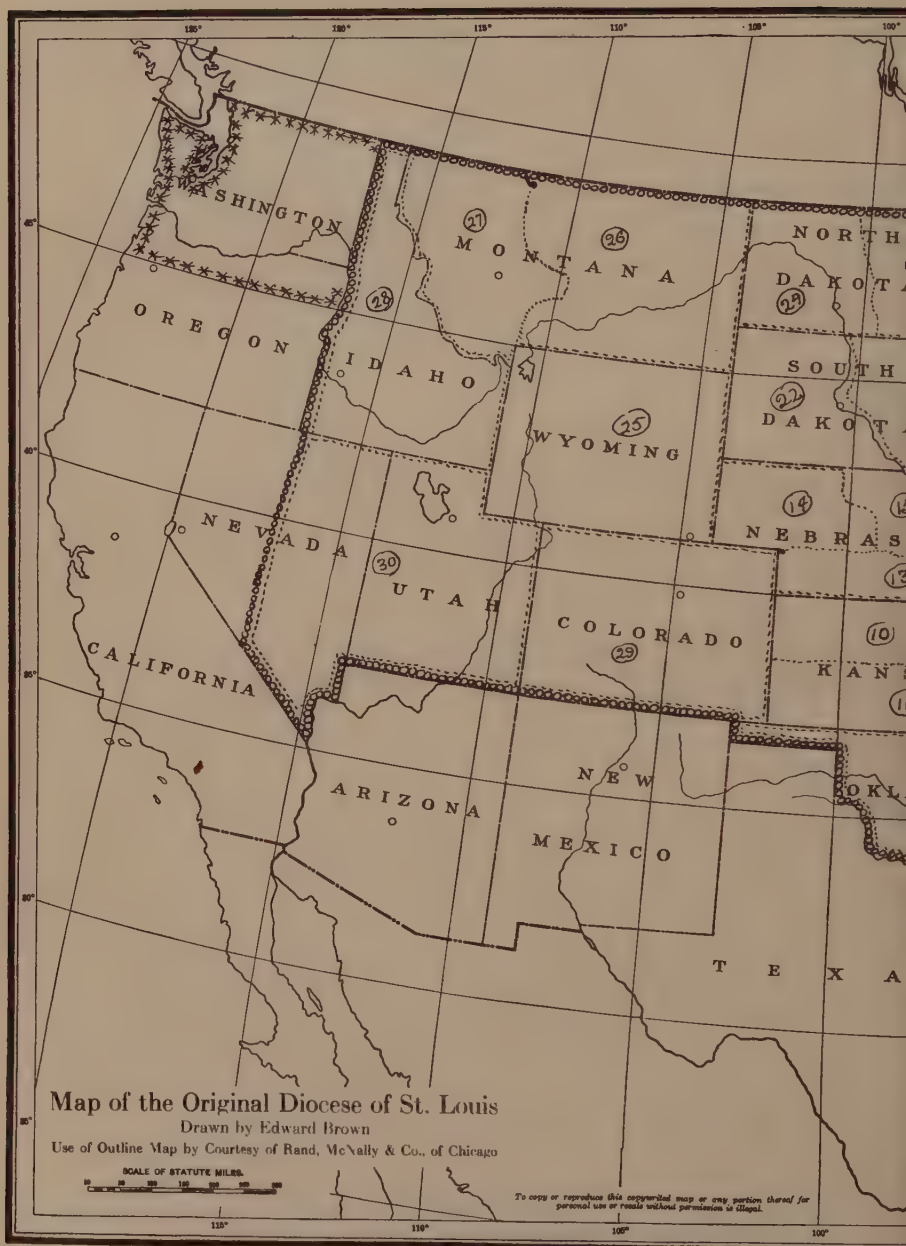
The members of Du Bourg's *caravane* and their immediate successors, who labored in the southern part of the diocese of Louisiana and, in consequence, became members of New Orleans, we will have an opportunity to meet on the occasion of Bishop Rosati's consecration and his subsequent Visitation of that diocese, of which he was appointed administrator. All of them have a share in the upbuilding of the diocese of Louisiana, the mother of the twin Sees of St. Louis and New Orleans.

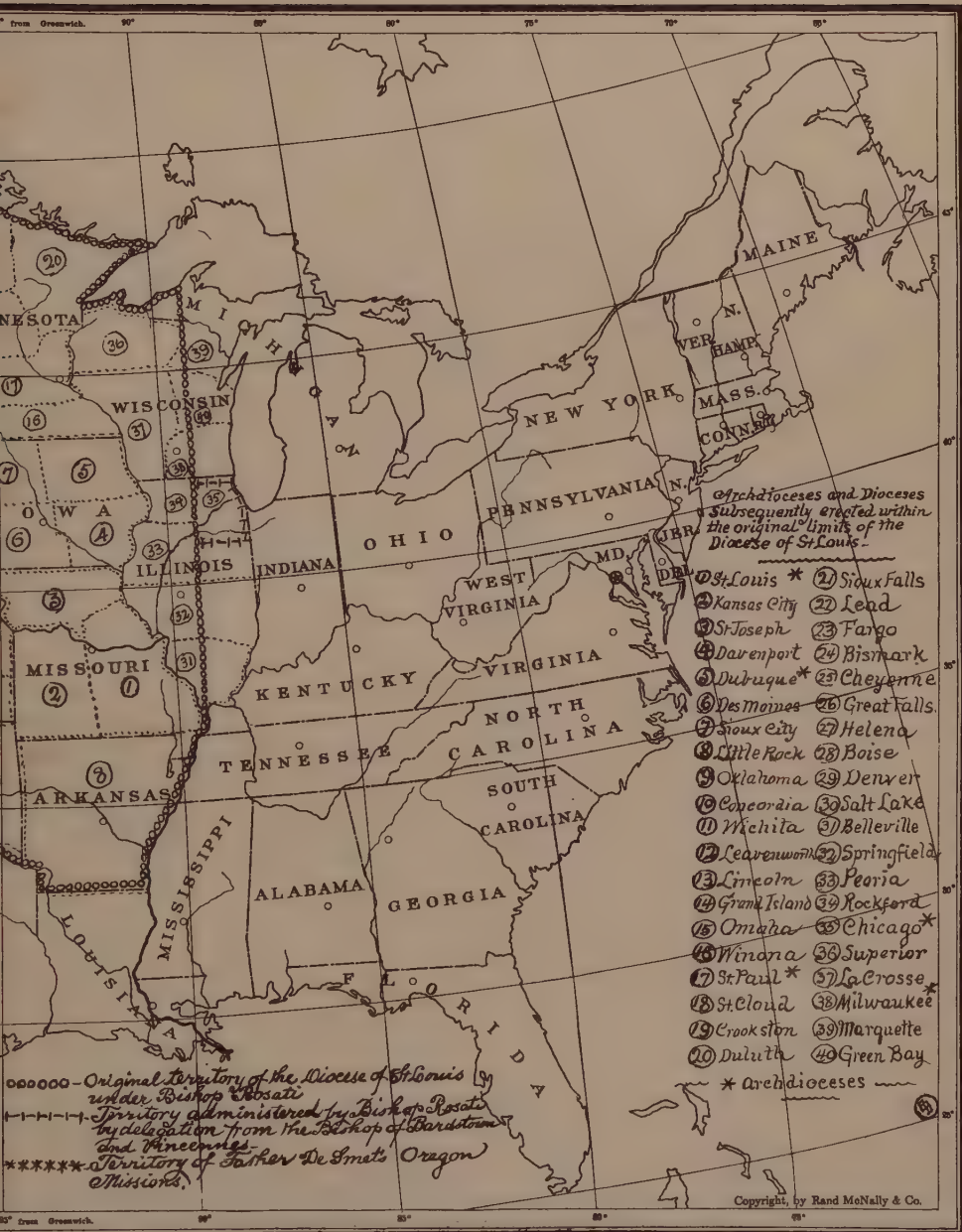
---

<sup>3</sup> "The Laity's Directory to the Church Services," 1822, New York. A copy is in the Chancery's Office of St. Louis Archdiocese.











PART TWO

---

THE DIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

BOOK I

*Bishop Joseph Rosati of St. Louis*



## PART II

### BOOK I

#### CHAPTER 1

#### THE DIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

In spite of the friendly relations that subsisted from the beginning between Bishop Du Bourg and his Vicar-General Joseph Rosati, there now appeared several ominous clouds on the horizon to disturb the peace and equanimity of both. One was Bishop Du Bourg's opposition to an early division of the really unmanageable diocese of Louisiana; another was the Prelate's urgent proposal to have the Seminary removed to the south, or at least, to have a Seminary of his own in Louisiana; the last and perhaps the most disquieting one was the apparent determination of the New Orleans's Prelate to withdraw to Lower Louisiana the greater number of the St. Louis clergy.

As Bishop Du Bourg had already chosen New Orleans as his special field of activity, it seemed highly probable that, at the division of the diocese, he would retain, as he had a right to do, the southern portion for his own. Although the Coadjutor Bishop was rather reticent in regard to Bishop Du Bourg's frequent calls for northern laborers to southern fields, his faithful brethren of the Congregation spoke out more boldly. Thus, among others, Father John Mary Odin, wrote from the Seminary on August 2, 1823: "On his return to his diocese, (from Washington) our Bishop (Du Bourg) remained a few days with us; he went afterwards to St. Louis and departed almost immediately for New Orleans, where he intends to spend the winter. He has not written for a long time. He is busy visiting his missionaries. It is possible that he will locate his residence in New Orleans or its suburbs. Bishop Rosati, who has been appointed his coadjutor, will administer in Upper Louisiana. The Bishop is bringing nearly all his priests down into Lower Louisiana. It is sad to see so many congregations neglected in the upper part of the state. If Providence does not send help, oh, how many souls will be lost!

"From Pointe-Coupee to Ste. Genevieve there is not one missionary. In St. Louis they have but three priests; and besides that city and

the neighboring villages, they have a college with fifty pupils to look after. Beyond St. Louis there are but two Jesuits. In the whole of Upper Louisiana there are only ten priests, and one a good and holy man, who can scarcely venture out of doors. The cities of Natchez, New Madrid, Cape Girardeau, Kaskaskia, St. Michael, Portage, St. Charles, and several small posts, are entirely abandoned. We have had the misfortune of losing several missionaries who have returned to Europe, and their departure has left a great want in our poor mission. Now and then we are called great distances on sick calls, and very often we cannot go, and these poor people must die without the consolations of religion."<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Rosati was inclined to justify or, at least, to excuse the Ordinary's seemingly arbitrary acts, although he had repeatedly sent remonstrances: "With regard to the Bishop's disposing of the subjects of the Congregation," he writes to Father Baccari, "I have had sometimes to complain that I had not been forewarned of the moves; but the case was urgent, and I was far away; he never failed to notify me, and when I insisted, he changed his policy. It is but just to add that our own men were the first to ask him for their change, some even without vouchsafing a word to me about it."<sup>2</sup>

To a man less generous and considerate than Rosati, it might have appeared that the New Orleans Prelate was providing against the day, when Louisiana should be separated from Missouri, and when Du Bourg should be Bishop of the lower part of the diocese.

As early as February 8, 1822, Du Bourg entertained the idea of a Metropolitan See in New Orleans with three suffragans:

"As to the erection of another See in the City of St. Louis, Missouri, no one certainly can be pleased with it and desire it more than myself, as it means for me relief from immense labors and cares. Still, there is one reason why I delay asking at once for it, namely, the most earnest desire I have to free from all debts and obligations certain quite extensive properties which I have bought as an endowment for that See; I trust that, God helping, I may within a year reach this happy goal. When this is accomplished I shall most gladly resign this part of my solicitude into the hands of the Sovereign Pontiff, hesitating at no sacrifice, in order that the Prelate who is appointed to this new See may be spared the temporal cares and the utmost destitution which were my lot for several years. When this is achieved I will set to work to pave the way for the formation of a new Diocese midway between St. Louis and New Orleans, which may

<sup>1</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. 1, 5, pp. 68-77, Records, vol. XIV, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> Rosati to Baccari, Archives of Procurator, Rome.

include the State of Mississippi and the Territory of Arkansas. Thus from one Diocese four shall be made out within a few years, and if it please the Holy See, these may constitute a new Ecclesiastical province."<sup>3</sup>

But in the course of time it became plain that this flattering dream could not be realized for a long time to come. Whilst, therefore, constantly imploring the Sacred Congregation for a Coadjutor for his vast diocese, "he was always particular about the integrity of its present boundaries. His reasons were: the disturbed condition of New Orleans, the poverty of Upper Louisiana, the mutual dependence of New Orleans and St. Louis one upon another. After Rosati's appointment to the Coadjutorship Bishop Du Bourg's importunities in regard to the postponement of the dismemberment, became even more pronounced. When Florida was erected into a diocese with Father Michael Portier as its head, Bishop Du Bourg, finds fault with the appointment of the new prelate.

"I would not have Your Grace conceive the least suspicion," he wrote to Archbishop Caprano, "that I am sorry of the dismemberment of Florida, from my Diocese, or of the loss of Father M. Portier. That Florida should be taken away from me, I have long petitioned; and I have never reaped anything but trouble from that wide expanse of territory. As to Father Portier, on account of his levity of mind and his affection of independence, I wish he would go somewhere else, where under the bridle of obedience that levity of his might be checked, and his natural talents might grow to maturity for the greater utility of the Church. But there is no use now of me wishing either of these things, as, in so far as I am personally concerned, I have no other longing and no other thought but for my freedom; however, even though the bands uniting me to this Church are to be severed, yet I shall never cease to wish it good, and to promote its increase by all means in my power."<sup>4</sup>

Whilst Bishop Du Bourg returns to the fruitless charge again and again, Bishop Rosati, expressed himself as well pleased with Father Portier's elevation: "I have just heard your appointment to the Bishopric of Alabama, and at the same time, your refusal. I was glad that you are known in Rome and hope your refusal will not be accepted. Owing to my great affection for you since I have had the privilege to know you, I feel a personal satisfaction at your elevation. I would not speak thus if the Episcopate in this country was a source of honors:

---

<sup>3</sup> Archives of Propaganda, cf. Souvay, "Correspondence of Bishop Du Bourg with Propaganda," in *St. Louis Catholic Historical Review*, vol. II, p. 150.

<sup>4</sup> Du Bourg to Cardinal Caprano, Propaganda Archives, Souvay, l. cit., p. 211. A Life-sketch of Bishop Michael Portier may be found in Richard H. Clarke's, "Lives of the Deceased Bishops," vol. I, pp. 438-456.

but crosses, afflictions, privations, humiliations, labors, and sufferings are our lot. Courageously, therefore, take up these crosses, and you will be on the high road to heaven.”<sup>5</sup>

Bishop Du Bourg was no longer in harmony with his surroundings and felt it keenly, at a time when his pet scheme of another Seminary in Louisiana had failed, through the personal initiative of his own best friends, Rosati, Flaget and David.

Father Odin in his letter just quoted, thus alludes to Bishop Du Bourg’s plan of a new Seminary: “Opelousas, a parish of Lower Louisiana, in which there is a community of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, has made a generous donation for the establishment of a seminary in that parish. The Bishop is deeply interested in this seminary. He wishes to have the Lazarist Fathers there and to make of it a retreat for his priests, who, constantly in the midst of the world, at great distances from one another, feel the necessity of retiring into solitude from time to time, to look after their souls’ welfare.”<sup>6</sup>

It was at Opelousas that Father Francis Cellini had obtained from Mrs. Charles Smith, a valuable tract of land and the promise of a suitable building for the establishment of a Seminary. This institution was to be conducted by the Congregation of the Mission, of which Father Cellini was then a member. Bishop Du Bourg was delighted with the prospect, although the offer contemplated only a “Preparatory Seminary.” Father Rosati, the Superior of the Community, at first accepted, and then, revoked the acceptance. Meanwhile Mrs. Smith wrote her will, in which she bequeathed all her property to Father Cellini, the understanding being that he was to use it for the good of religion and education. The act of the pious lady greatly irritated the Bishop, and caused much very unpleasant comment among the priests and people of Louisiana. Bishop Du Bourg’s strictures on Father Cellini’s character at this time, are too passionate and severe to be true. Father De Neckere judged the priest far more kindly; Father Rosati’s report, too, was very mild; and, at a later date, after the departure of Bishop Du Bourg, he did not hesitate to give him a place in the Diocese of St. Louis.

These facts go far to show that Father Cellini’s conduct was not as bad as it had been represented. When one remembers the great praises bestowed on Father Cellini when the latter was in Missouri, and even sometime after he had gone to Grand Coteau, La., one cannot resist the impression that this total reversal of feeling in the Bishop was due to some personal wound received directly or indirectly from Cellini.

---

<sup>5</sup> Rosati to Portier, in Rosati’s Diary, “St. Louis Catholic Historical Review,” vol. XIV, p. 180, note.

<sup>6</sup> *Annales*, vol. I, p. 5, Records, vol. XIV, p. 190.

No doubt the latter's influence on Mrs. Smith, and the donation made by her of the property to Father Cellini, had a great deal to do with the Bishop's judgment. In consequence of this notoriety Father Cellini asked and obtained permission to go to Rome, where he formally left the Congregation of the Missions. "Had Father Cellini been less precipitate, and followed my wishes, everything would have been done without noise, scandal and opposition," is Bishop Rosati's final judgment.<sup>7</sup>

But, though frustrated for the time, the idea of a seminary in the South had now become fixed in the mind of Bishop Du Bourg. At Bishop Rosati's consecration in Donaldsonville the two prelates discussed the matter in all its bearings. A donation of 1,000 acres of good land had already been received through the generosity of Father Bernard, the retired Capuchin at La Fourche: \$4,000.00 were offered by one of the priests of the diocese, for the erection of the buildings. The proposed location appeared to Bishop Rosati as "one of the most desirable in Louisiana." As Superior of the Lazarists, he immediately submitted the offer to Father Baccari at Rome, with his own recommendation.

In the course of a year, however, the plan took on a new and disquieting form: the actual suppression, namely, of the Seminary at the Barrens in favor of the new Seminary in Southern Louisiana. In the summer of 1825, the Coadjutor Bishop was requested by Bishop Du Bourg to meet him at Assumption, La., for a most important consultation. The topics discussed were the straitened circumstances of the Seminary at the Barrens, which seemed to necessitate its discontinuance, as well as the pressing needs of the South, and the favorable opportunity to secure the future of the Church in Louisiana and in Missouri. The Coadjutor could not see the matter in this light. "His soul was pierced to the quick," as he himself expresses it, and he represented to the eager prelate the dismal condition into which the Church of Missouri would be plunged by this move, depriving it of all spiritual help. But Bishop Du Bourg retorted with vehemence, that the refusal to consent was tantamount to bringing ruin upon the whole Diocese. Thereupon the gentle Son of St. Vincent consented, though reluctantly, and wrote to the Vicar-General of the Congregation for his approval. This occurred in August 1825. Bishop Rosati spent the next few months in deep anxiety concerning the outcome of the matter.<sup>8</sup>

On meeting the Prelate on November 8th., at St. John the Baptist's La., he urged the difficulties besetting the contemplated foundation: and after weighing them carefully, both came to the conclusion that

<sup>7</sup> Holweck, "*Pastoral-Blatt*," vol. 59, pp. 82 ss.

<sup>8</sup> Diary, August 16, 1825.

it was of the utmost importance, before anything else be done, that Bishop Rosati should find out what the priests of the Congregation in Missouri thought about the change. Upon his return to the Barrens, Bishop Rosati, on Friday, November 25th, assembled all the priests of the Congregation, that is, Father De Neckere, Assistant, Fathers Dahmen, Permolli and Odin, and manifested to them the Bishop's desire of erecting another Seminary in Louisiana, and the utility which might be derived therefrom for Religion in general, and their Congregation in particular; the means which the Bishop thinks of employing to realize it; the very great difficulties to be encountered in employing these means, and the harm eventually to result from this project for the Seminary at the Barrens and for practically all the Catholics of the State of Missouri and of the neighboring country, owing to the lack of priests. All these things being duly weighed before God, it was unanimously resolved that the Bishop of New Orleans should be begged to postpone the erection of that new Seminary in Louisiana, until they had the money and the men necessary for the undertaking. Bishop Rosati therefore, wrote to Bishop Du Bourg for that purpose.

It may be of interest here to learn how the Coadjutor's council met the proposals of the Bishop of New Orleans. Bishop Du Bourg had told Rosati, that, in order to make the foundation of the Seminary a success: 1) he intended to buy a house and a plantation, that is, cultivated land, adjacent to the uncultivated land which had been donated for the foundation of the Seminary: this purchase, might be concluded by the immediate payment of \$3,000 and the obligation to pay a yearly life-interest of \$1,200 to the owner, who is a man 74 years of age, but enjoying good health. 2) In order to have the funds necessary to build the College and furnish it, he would ask a loan from the State Bank: this establishment exacts an interest of 7 per cent and the annual payment of one-fifth of the principal. 3) To put in cultivation the land on which sugar-cane may be raised, he would enter into partnership with some one who would attend to the cultivation; the surplus realized over and above the expenses would be equally divided. All this appeared very objectionable to Rosati and he communicated his misgivings to the Bishop, telling him that, before coming to any definite conclusion he would have to consult the priests on his return to the Barrens.<sup>9</sup>

Upon these propositions, the members of the Council made the following observations: "1) It would be dangerous for us to run so much into debt; crops are uncertain; we might expose ourselves to bankruptcy, and would be forced to sell everything to the disgrace of the Congregation and Religion at large. 2) The number of our priests is too small to be divided into two houses; it will be difficult to find one capable of

---

<sup>9</sup> Rosati to Baccari, cf. "Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, p. 177.

being Superior; this division will oblige us to withdraw the priests from the missions where they are now so fruitfully employed; again, it would be unjust to do violence to the reasonable inclination these confreres have for the works of the holy ministry, if we were to compel them to spend the greater part of their lives in teaching reading, writing, spelling, etc. 3) It looks like downright injustice to abandon Upper Louisiana, that is to say, the State of Missouri, and practically to deprive of workers a country where there is such immense fruit to harvest."<sup>10</sup>

This decision was communicated to Father Baccari and to Bishop Du Bourg. How it was received by the latter is not known, yet it must have nettled the all too sensitive prelate. In a letter from New Orleans, dated December 9th, 1825, Du Bourg sadly notifies his Coadjutor of his Fiat to the deliberation of the priests of the Seminary, deciding to postpone undertaking the establishment of another Seminary, in Lower Louisiana, and then gives vent to his feelings: "As I have only a few years to live, I shall probably not see the extinction of the Diocese; and even if I do see it, I shall have nothing to reproach myself with."

But gentle and unselfish as Bishop Rosati was, he would not act upon his own judgment; though seconded by that of his collaborators; but laid the matter before the saintly Bishop Flaget and his Coadjutor Bishop David for their impartial decision to be sent to Rome. Their letter to Propaganda was couched in the following strong language:

1. My Coadjutor and I firmly believe it is not only expedient, but urgent, to make the division: because, until it is made, all the zeal and talents of Bishop Rosati are kept, as it were, in concealment; and for this cause, the time limit stated in the Bull for the division ought not to be extended.

2. Our firm conviction is, that the projects explained by Bishop Du Bourg to Bishop Rosati are prejudicial in every respect. If, indeed, the transfer of the Seminary takes place, the blow will be fatal to Religion in Upper Louisiana, entailing a loss that cannot be easily repaired.

3. We are convinced, moreover, that the project is fraught with danger, because it involves the contracting of debts without any hope of being able to meet them. Furthermore, we believe it necessary that the division should be made as soon as possible, so that Bishop Rosati may have the right to call back such clergymen as he may deem fit to help him in his administration. This recall will have, of course, to be made with prudence; but it is absolutely imperative.

This is our conclusion grounded principally on the perfect knowledge we have of Bishop Du Bourg. When Father Martial, V. G., arrives in Rome, you may get more information touching Bishop Rosati's

---

<sup>10</sup> Rosati to Baccari, l. cit., pp. 177 and 178.

situation, which will enable you to take prompt measures to extricate him from his painful position.”<sup>11</sup>

The measure of Bishop Du Bourg’s troubles and bitter disappointments was now full to overflowing. He could bear the strain no longer, but he wrapped his intentions in secrecy.

On Thursday, April 20th, 1826, he arrived at the Barrens and informed the Coadjutor that he intended to leave for Europe in the interest of his New Seminary in La Fourche. Both Bishops went to Ste. Genevieve on their way to St. Louis. On Ascension day he preached at the Cathedral and immediately after Mass went to the steamboat, to which he would allow no one to accompany him, on his way to France. From New York he wrote to his Coadjutor, and on June 1st, sailed for Havre, never to return.

At the request of the departing Prelate, Bishop Rosati had gone down to Louisiana, returning to the Barrens on July 19th, to celebrate the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul. Resuming his ordinary duties at the Seminary, he was deeply surprised and grieved when on October 5th, he received from Father Niel, now his agent in Europe, the intelligence of Bishop Du Bourg’s resignation. At first Bishop Rosati regarded the report as a pure invention of the papers at home and abroad. Bishop Du Bourg had not dropped a single hint as to resigning: in fact, his conversations with and his letters to the Coadjutor had all been of a hopeful nature. But on November 4th, Bishop Rosati, who had gone to St. Louis for the consecration of Bishop Portier, received the Pontifical Brief notifying him, that Bishop Du Bourg’s resignation had been accepted, that Louisiana had been divided, and that he himself had been appointed administrator of both. Bishop Rosati at once informed all the pastors of what had occurred: “Two briefs wherewith His Holiness has honored me confirm most unfortunately the rumor which for several weeks has caused me very painful anxiety. Bishop Du Bourg has actually resigned, and his resignation has been accepted. The former Diocese of New Orleans, as Pius VII of holy memory had decided by the brief of my election as coadjutor of the same Diocese, has just been divided: the one part including the states of Louisiana and Mississippi, and the other the state of Missouri and adjacent territories. The See of the one shall be New Orleans; and of the other St. Louis. The Holy Father has entrusted to me, until further orders, the care of them both and grants me the necessary faculties.

You will certainly share in my regrets for the departure of the illustrious Prelate to whom the Diocese owes its priests, its colleges,

---

<sup>11</sup> Flaget to Baccari, January 1, 1826.

its monasteries, its Seminary, in a word, all the good done in it since Divine Providence had confided it to him.”<sup>12</sup>

The question as to what See Bishop Rosati was ultimately to occupy as his own, was for the present left in abeyance. But it was clear that a decision must soon be made. A mere wish of His Holiness would appear to the Administrator as a command. And yet Bishop Rosati felt that his going to New Orleans would be fatal to him and to the diocese. He decided once more to seek counsel from his trusted friend, at Bardstown: but in the meantime he wrote a letter to Father Baccari, stating the reasons, why he should be left at St. Louis. The letter is dated January 6, 1827, and reads in part: “My motives are the following:

“I am now perfectly inured to the climate of Missouri, whereas that of Louisiana does not agree with me, as I have experienced in my various trips there: as I am now rather stout, the excessive heat prevailing there is so hard on me, that I am then unable to study or apply myself to anything: and moreover it occasions me great inconvenience.

“New Orleans is a large city, the population of which is for the most part made up of unbelievers and other enemies of Religion. There is needed there a man capable of speaking the language eloquently, so as to impose respect for the Word of God, and not expose it to the danger of being scoffed at in the newspapers by such as go to listen to the preacher, *ut capiant eum in sermone*. Now, I have not the talent requisite for a ministry so important and, in that city, so difficult. On the other hand, in Missouri people are more religious, they come to church with upright intentions, and on that account, no such bad effects are to be feared as in New Orleans, and some good is actually done; moreover all here know and esteem me.”<sup>13</sup>

In the depth of winter, January 7th, Bishop Rosati with Brother Blanka, started for St. Genevieve, where Father Dahmen joined them. Their journey was most difficult and trying, but they arrived safe and sound at Bardstown on January 19th. Their welcome there was cordial. All the loved and hallowed spots in the neighborhood, the Cathedral, St. Thomas Seminary, Loretto, Nazareth, were visited. In long and earnest conferences the subject so new to Bishop Rosati's heart was discussed by the three prelates, Flaget, David, and Rosati and the conclusion was reached that Bishop Rosati should decline New Orleans, and that the friends should write to Rome on the matter. The homeward journey was to touch Vincennes. At Nazareth the Bishop of St. Louis *in spe* took leave of Bishop David, and at Bethany two days

<sup>12</sup> Rosati's letter to the Pastors of St. Louis and New Orleans, November 6, 1826, in “Catholic Historical Review,” vol. III, pp. 181 and 182.

<sup>13</sup> Archives of the Procurator General C. M., Rome, in Souvay, l. cit., p. 183.

later, of Bishop Flaget. Here it was that took place the touching scene described by Archbishop Spalding so characteristic of the faith, humility and child-like simplicity and candor of the two prelates. "So deeply," says the historian, "was Bishop Rosati impressed with the sanctity of his reverend friend, that on taking his leave he fell on his knees, and refused to arise until he would receive a blessing. Bishop Flaget, taken by surprise, on the impulse of the moment, imitated the example of the other prelate; and the scene closed with a mutual benediction imparted to each other, and a parting embrace."<sup>14</sup>

Bishop Du Bourg, who soon after his arrival in France became Bishop of Montauban, was enlisted by Bishop Rosati in favor of his relief from the threatening burden. Under date of May 1st, 1827, he wrote from his new episcopal city to the Cardinal Prefect of the propaganda:

"I regret to see, Your Eminence, that the extreme modesty of Bishop Rosati inspires him with an unsurmountable aversion for the See of New Orleans. He is convinced that the position requires talents more distinguished than his. I do not share his opinion, and am convinced, that no other Bishop may do there more good than he. It is not so much eloquence, as solid knowledge, profound wisdom, and a virtue above every suspicion, which are demanded in that important office. The first of these qualities would perhaps only invite censure; the others have already, won for him the affection and respect of all.

"I realize none the less whatever deference is due to so marked a repugnance in a Prelate of such sterling virtues. His constitution, moreover, does not seem suited for the scorching heat prevailing in that climate during half of the year; and his preservation is too precious to Religion to permit to expose him to too great a danger.

"There is only, that I can see, one means to reconcile all the interests at stake, namely to leave to Bishop Rosati, for an unlimited length of time, the administration of both parts of that great Diocese, and to give him a Coadjutor to assist him or supply his place in Lower Louisiana. All my previous letters to the S. Congregation expressed this wish, and I am glad that he himself is saying the same. For indeed, with all his modesty, he could scarcely be blind to the fact that no other man will be able for a long time to unite the hearts and assure the submission of a clergy made up of all kinds of men, ever ready to be divided or to take liberties; and his office of Superior of the Congregation of the Mission gives him advantages which no other can have.

"He proposes as Coadjutor, Father Leo De Neckere, a priest of his Congregation, native of Flanders, who has already spent well-nigh ten years in Louisiana, and is exceptionally remarkable by his knowledge, his virtues, and above all, the gift of a most distinguished eloquence

---

<sup>14</sup> Spalding, "Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions of Kentucky," p. 261.

both in English and in French. Two objections, however, might be raised against him, his youth and his health. He is scarcely twenty-six years of age, but his outward appearance, his gravity and his wisdom are of a man of forty. His health, undermined by application and sedentary work, suffered very much from the cold and dry climate of Upper Louisiana; but it benefits by the damp heat of New Orleans; from this point of view, he is just the reverse of Bishop Rosati. So, as there is, after all, question of conferring upon him only a dependent authority, this choice seems well-advised. Several secondary reasons might confirm the wisdom of it. Father De Neckere is universally respected by his brother-priests and the people, and as he is Flemish, it might probably attract soon to the Mission a certain number of his fellow-countrymen, who, of all nationalities, are those who are succeeding best.

"I am afraid only that persuasive means may not be able to determine him to accept the weighty burden of the Episcopate, which is doubly heavy in a country like Louisiana. Probably nothing short of a peremptory command of His Holiness will be able to prevail upon him."<sup>15</sup>

This was really the course pursued by the Sacred Congregation. Bishop Rosati was appointed to the newly erected See of St. Louis on May 20th, 1827, but continued in the office of Administrator of the diocese of New Orleans until August 4th, 1829, when Father De Neckere, notwithstanding his remonstrance, was elected Bishop of the southern See. Owing to continued ill health Bishop De Neckere's consecration could not take place until June 24th, 1830.

Bishop Louis William Valentine Du Bourg, in 1833, was promoted to the Archiepiscopal See of Besançon where he died December 12th, 1833. There can be no doubt that the Church in the Mississippi Valley is deeply indebted to the strange combination of romantic hopefulness and almost fool-hardy enterprise, with genuine piety, solid learning and a deep sense of justice, as embodied in Bishop Du Bourg. The real harvest was reserved for others: But the praise of having prepared the soil and cast the seed into the furrows belongs to him. Well may his heart have exulted at the close of his thorny career in the thought of his small beginnings, of his triumphs and of the glorious promise of his work, as he did in his retrospective letter to Abbe Lespinasse:

"Feeling that it was impossible to plunge into my episcopal city (New Orleans) without compromising, from the very start, the holy character and authority with which I was invested, I decided to begin

---

<sup>15</sup> Du Bourg, to Propaganda, May 1, 1827. Propaganda Archives, cf. Souvay, *Correspondence of Du Bourg*, in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, pp. 219 and 220. Sketch of Bishop Du Bourg's Life in Clarke, "Lives of the Deceased Bishops," vol. I, pp. 205 ss.

operations by attacking the weakest points of my diocese. Thence, as from a stronghold in which I could muster my forces I would sally forth, and having conquered the surrounding territory, the citadel would finally be obliged to surrender. St. Louis and the immense territory of the Missouri were the first scene of my maneuvers. I had difficulties here, of all kinds to struggle with. Profound ignorance, and its attendant evils, general corruption, lack of morals, dire poverty. I had not whereon to lay my head, and I was accompanied by fifty-three brothers in arms.

"We fell back into the woods, to serve as a shelter. We laid the foundation of an edifice, which after four or five years of trial, we had the happiness of seeing completed. The fields were cultivated; the live stock increased; a mill was built. From this center, my pioneers went forth in all directions. They cleared the country. They even penetrated into the chief city, were received with confidence, and finally succeeded in disposing the inhabitants to accept their leader.

"This seminary, finally established in Missouri, I turned my attention to St. Louis. I renovated the dilapidated parsonage. I built a school house, which was taken in charge by my clergy. They also contributed to its support, the parish giving absolutely no aid. Each one contributed so much, however, towards the construction of a church. We established the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, in the neighborhood, and their institution was flourishing, for a time. Then, on account of great poverty in that section of the city, it languished, but is now enjoying its former success. This convent is in a beautiful locality. They have a fine house, a church, etc., and accomplish a great deal of good. They have a great many poor girls and also some little savages. I had the happiness of establishing the Jesuits in the same quarter, sometime after, in a very pretty house, which I gave them. They are seven in number, without counting the brothers. They will surely do great good in the future, but they are destitute of everything, save what they can raise themselves. I trust that Providence will come to their aid. God never abandons those who work for Him, though He sends them trials, sometimes, to try their faith and increase their merit. The government pays them for the support of a few savages. In order to secure a piece of bread for the bishop and his clergy, I bought some waste land near the city, but through lack of laborers to work upon it, it produces nothing as yet. It will perhaps, be a source of revenue in the future, as will be also about ten other lots, in the city itself. To sum up, five years ago, I arrived for the first time in New Orleans."<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. II, pp. 403 and 409. Records, vol. XIV, pp. 163 and 164. Concerning Bishop Leo De Neckere see Clarke, vol. I, pp. 518 ss.

## CHAPTER 2

### ROSATI'S VISITATION IN THE DIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS

One of the chief duties of a Bishop is the visitation of his diocese at regular intervals. Accordingly Louisiana claimed the Administrator's immediate attention.<sup>1</sup> Early in March 1827, he had gone to New Orleans to organize an Episcopal Council, composed of Father Sedella, the Vicar-General, and Fathers Moni, Richard, Borgna and Jeanjean as members. The first meeting was held on Thursday, March 29th. On June 16th, the Administrator returned to his own flock in Missouri: but in November he started once more for the South, to set everything in order pending the coming of the new Bishop. The journey down the river proved a vivid exemplification of St. Paul's "perils by water."

Of the events which marked the journey the Bishop's Diary affords a narrative worth quoting here:

"At about two o'clock, the boat, which was going downstream at quite a rapid pace ran into a huge snag lying some four feet under water; and such was the impact that a hole was torn in the craft, so that the latter filled rapidly. The wheels, now deep in the water, could no longer obey the force of steam. Then the helmsman turned all his might to directing the boat, now full to overflowing, towards the shore; providentially it happened that we soon reached in the attempt a part of the river where the water was only nine feet deep; there the boat stopped, resting on the bottom, and so we were snatched from what seemed imminent death. When we were told by the Captain that all danger of death was now over, we went down into a rowboat which carried us to the bank of the river; and there, after we had somewhat recovered from the stupor caused us by the imminent danger of death which we had just escaped, we had to think about the necessary means of building up some huts to spend the night and the following days. For we were on a desert river-bank, and there was no hope of saving our boat. Accordingly before night we had some huts erected which we roofed with pieces of linen and of cloth."

---

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of this Episcopal Visitation of the Diocese of New Orleans, see the article of Dr. Souvay in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. 1, pp. 215, ss. As most of the facts are taken from Rosati's Diary, March 16-29, 1827, we need not mention the source of information for the various statements.

The boat is destroyed, and out of its planks a few huts are constructed. At last, ten days after this shipwreck, the passengers are taken up by the Steamer *Lafayette*, with the *Amazon* in tow. Nine days later, December 28th, when about twelve miles from New Orleans, the *Lafayette* caught fire, and it was feared she was to be the prey of the flames. Fire had broken out in the hold. As soon as the alarm was sounded, we all rushed to the *Amazon* near-by. But our fear did not last long, for in a short while the crew-men were able to put out the fire completely. We reached New Orleans about 3 p.m.

On Monday the Episcopal Visitation began at the Parish of the Ascension, Donaldsonville, where Father Joseph Tichitoli was Pastor. On the following Wednesday the Bishop, accompanied by Father John Bouillier, reached the parish of the Assumption.

Returning to Donaldsonville for the Christmas festivities, he journeyed to St. Josephs, seven leagues from the Assumption, where Father Audizio received him with great joy. Returning from St. Josephs to Assumption and Donaldsonville he started, on January 4, 1828, for St. Gabriels, Iberville, where Father Paul de Saint Pierre had spent his declining years. A Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated for the repose of the soul of the former pastor of Cahokia, Ste. Genevieve and St. Gabriels. On January 8th, the Bishop in company with Father Eugene Michaud, the pastor of St. Gabriels and Father Bouillier, set out for Baton Rouge, the home of Father Anthony Blanc. Illness compelled the Bishop to prolong his stay at Baton Rouge.

On the following Saturday he was at last able to take his departure on the boat *The Lady of the Lake*, which took him and his companion Father Bouillier to St. Michael's where they arrived on Sunday, rather late in the morning, during the celebration of the parochial High Mass.

Following the Visitation, Father Auguste Jeanjean was appointed Confessor and Superior of the Sacred Heart Convents of St. Michael's and Grand Coteau, while Father Dussossoy was officially Rector of St. Michael's.

Once more, on the morning of Friday, January 25, Bishop Rosati and his fidus Achates, Father John Bouillier, crossed the Mississippi; they were headed this time towards the parish of St. John the Baptist, on the German Coast, where they arrived in mid-afternoon. The evening and the next day were given to rest and to the enjoyment of the whole-hearted hospitality of the pastor Father Louis Mina and his guest for the time being, Father De Angelis. From St. John the Baptist the Administrator, together with his inseparable Father Bouillier and Father De Angelis, boarded the *Paul Jones*, for New Orleans. Thus ended the first round of Visitations.

Trouble had been brewing in the City during the Bishop's absence. "The Trustees," Bishop Rosati tells us, "led and persuaded by one Mr. Cavelier, had been circulating among the Catholics a petition which they requested the latter to sign, and which they meant to present to the Legislature of Louisiana, in order to obtain from that body that a law be passed enabling the same Trustees to refuse henceforth any pastors in whose appointment they did not concur. I summoned together to a meeting all the clergy actually present in New Orleans; the Right Rev. Michael Portier, Bishop of Oleno and Vicar Apostolic of Alabama and Florida, and the Right Rev. Bonaventure Esperon, Bishop of Jericho in partibus, who happened to be then in the city, were pleased to grace our meetings by their presence. There were at this meeting the Very Rev. Anthony de Sedella, V. G., and Pastor, the Reverend Fathers Moni, Richard, Borgna, De Angelis, Maenhaut, Ganihl, Per-moli, Bouillier, Medina and Cunsade. Having read the aforementioned petition, I asked; 1. Whether or not it was in conformity with the doctrine and discipline of the Catholic Church; 2. Whether or not a Rector elected by the Trustees was to be regarded as an interloper. It was answered unanimously: 1. that the petition was contrary to the doctrine and discipline of the Catholic Church; 2. that the priest elected to a pastorship by the Trustees should be held to be an interloper. Then it was decreed that the Proceedings of this meeting should be written in full and signed by all present, and that an authentic copy of these proceedings should be sent to the Trustees by a Committee made up of Father Anthony de Sedella, Moni and Maenhaut. Accordingly, minutes of the meeting were at once written by Father Ganihl and signed by all present."

The Administrator did not believe his action in the matter should be ended by the holding of this meeting; he made it a point to see some of the members of the Senate of Louisiana, and to impress upon them the idea that the petition circulated by the Trustees was in opposition to the laws of the Catholic Church, and that, therefore, the State law-makers could not legislate on the matter without violating the Constitution of the United States which guarantees the freedom of all worship.

In explanation of Bishop Rosati's action the following passages from his letter to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda will be serviceable:

I am under the impression that Your Eminence is well aware that the temporalities of all the parishes of the Diocese of New Orleans, and their revenues are administered by a Board of laymen, commonly called *Marguilliers* (Trustees), elected by the Catholics of the Parish. Whatever is done by these Trustees is approved and held valid before

civil law. Now it occurs quite frequently that men who have no idea whatever of religion, moved by the lust of authority, present their candidatures to such an office, and are actually elected. A majority of Trustees of that kind, who are administering the revenues of the church of New Orleans, sent in to the State Legislature a petition, which they persuaded quite a number of the Catholics of New Orleans to sign, asking the privilege to refuse to accept any Pastor in whose appointment or election they, or the whole Catholic people, had no part.

The argument of the Trustees is that in a Republic the people ought to enjoy the same rights as are exercised by kings and princes in monarchies. But they do not advert to the fact that those rights are in no way inherent in the monarchs or in the Republic officials; but were bestowed by the Church herself, as a recognition of some important temporal benefits conferred upon her by these monarchs and princes. As, on the other hand, there has never been made here any such concession, and there is no reason why any should ever be made, because the Government has never granted nor can grant any benefices, or any privileges to the Church, without violating the Constitution, one does not see whence this right to make appointments could ever arise. They argue that the *jus patronatus* gives to the patron the faculty to appoint to parishes and benefices; but this *jus patronatus* is granted by the Church to the Founders, not to the parishioners. Even here, in New Orleans, this right was not granted to that Spaniard who built the Cathedral at his own expense; nor was it ever asked by him; therefore, even though his heirs should claim the exercise of this right, they could not, because prescription to the contrary has intervened. Moreover, what has not the Church to fear, if ever the election of a pastor should depend on laymen with no ecclesiastical knowledge whatever, men of whom scarcely a few have any religious sense, and some are openly haters of religion? God avert this calamity, the worst that could befall this Diocese!"<sup>2</sup>

Bishop Rosati then requests a declaration by the Holy Father on the matter in order to settle once for all the disturbances constantly raised by the marguilliers. "For," says he "the Constitution of the United States, and of the State of Louisiana provides that nothing can be enacted which would tend to impede the free exercise of religion. Accordingly as soon as it will be proven, and will be made evident that it is contrary to the principles and to the discipline of the Catholic Church, that the people of any parish refuse to receive a Pastor, because

---

<sup>2</sup> The draft of this letter is preserved in the Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

they had no part in his appointment or election, *ipso facto* any concession made on this point by the Legislature will be null and void''<sup>3</sup>

It was an appeal to the law-makers the enemies of the Church had made: Bishop Rosati countered their move by an appeal to the supreme law of the land, the Constitution of the United States. Who should win could no longer be doubtful.

In any case the Bishop's courage and firmness, so different from his predecessors vacillating policy, quelled the incipient revolution for the time being; so that the visitation of the diocese could proceed in peace.

On February 11th, the Bishop always with Father Bouiller, boarded the *Integrity*, bound for Western Louisiana. Slowly the craft plowed its way along, passing on February 12, in sight of St. Michaels's and, the next day entering the Bayou Plaquemine. Up the stream they proceeded that day and the whole of the next day; and about night-fall they reached the Caron landing, where they disembarked and spent the night. Early the next morning Father Flavius H. Rossi, Pastor of Opelousas, came to fetch our Apostolic traveler to his residence, three miles away, and after a suitable refection put them on their way to the town of Vermillionville, which was already beginning to be popularly designated by the name, destined to supplant the former, of Lafayette. Before night the weary travelers had reached the Rectory of St. John the Evangelist's and were enjoying the hospitality of the pastor, Father Lawrence Peyretti. From Vermillionville to St. Martinville, the distance is only fourteen miles; it was easily covered in the afternoon of the 18th. Old Saint Martins, the quaint Acadian village, amid its venerable oaks, from whose branches garlands of Spanish moss, and mystic mistletoe flaunted, is one of our Country's most venerated shrines of poetry. But Bishop Rosati's visit to St. Martin was no pilgrimage to poetry's shrine, but an errand of mercy. "For," he tells us, "the pastor, Father Marcel Borella, had been lying abed for three months with his thigh-bone broken, and five days ago, as he was beginning to convalesce, the thigh was broken again. We were most kindly received by him, and I could not but admire the sweetness of his character and his patience." Two full days the Bishop edified himself at the bedside of the pious rector.

St. Charles du Grand Coteau was the next parish scheduled to be visited. From St. Martin the Administrator had first to retrace his steps to Vermillionville, whence he started on Friday, February 22, Just on the bridge crossing the Bayou Carencro, the horse drawing the

---

3 Rosati to Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda.

episcopal carriage fell, and it was only by the narrowest of margins that horse, carriage and travelers escaped being thrown into the Bayou. At the Rectory of St. Charles, Bishop Rosati was at home, as the Pastor, Father John Rosti, was a Lazarist.

Moreover, the prelate was keenly interested in the welfare of the new Sacred Heart Convent of Grand Coteau, which was as yet quite a modest establishment — five choir Sisters, and one lay Sister; the Academy numbered thirty-three pupils—indeed during the whole length of his sojourn at St. Charles, he made the Convent chapel his Episcopal oratory: Particularly worthy of notice is the fact, carefully recorded in his Diary, that on Friday, February 29, at half past three in the afternoon, he solemnly administered the Sacrament of Baptism to three of the Academy girls converted from Protestantism: Mary Elizabeth Gordon and Martha Frances Bell, both twelve years old, and Mary Clarissa Curtis, nine years of age. All three had obtained the consent of their parents.

After a full week at St. Charles, it was now the turn of Father Rossi, pastor of Opelousas, to entertain the Administrator. Father Rossi, indeed, went to St. Charles to bring the Prelate to his home and to the new church of St. Landry which he was to consecrate. Although the journey by a driving rain and through muddy roads had been rather trying, still the Prelate was, the next morning, second Sunday in Lent, ready for work. March 4, was the day appointed for the consecration of the new church of Opelousas, and everything was in readiness. All the requirements of the Pontifical were carried out, Father Flavius Rossi, the pastor, and Father Bouiller, C. M., acting as assistants to the Bishop. There was, too, an immense crowd of people in attendance, and the Prelate marks with wonderment that there had been counted no less, than five hundred saddle-horses, and thirty carriages of every description parking around the church.

In the meantime the Mississippi River had risen to extreme height and broken the levees at Point Couppee and Iberville; all the low lands were flooded seven feet deep. The Bishop left for Donaldsonville and spent two weeks there in company of Father Joseph Tichitoli. Thence he went down the river on a passing flat-boat and arrived at New Orleans on Holy Thursday.

On the 12th of May, Bishop Rosati boarded the steamship *Jubilee* Captain Price, bound for the Barrens where he arrived on the 22nd.

This visitation of the parishes of Louisiana was Bishop Rosati's fond adieu to the priests with whom he had been connected so long both officially and in holy friendship. Most of them he was not to see

again in life. But he remained in charge of the diocese as Administrator, and consequently took a lively interest in its affairs.

The closing words of his letter to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda manifest his deep interest.

"I have now gone through the two Dioceses committed to my care, and made the Visitation of almost all the parishes. Everywhere, in the midst of difficulties which confront Religion in this Country, I have found ample motives to extol and bless the infinite goodness of God, for the graces which He bestows so abundantly upon the Faith. During the last six months I have confirmed more than twelve hundred persons, all of whom had gone to communion and were in excellent dispositions; everywhere the word of God is bringing fruit—more or less—, in patience; everywhere the Protestants show veneration towards the Catholic religion and its priests, and in many places some Protestants embrace the Catholic Faith; all are willing to listen to the word of God preached by the Catholic priests; nay more, I myself, after preaching in French to the Catholics, was asked by Protestants to preach in English. There are, in the two Dioceses, nine religious Communities and Monasteries, two of men and seven of women: in them piety and regularity are flourishing and their success is evidenced by the number of their pupils. New churches, either of stone or brick, have been erected; in the Diocese of St. Louis two are not yet completely finished, but three are finished in the Diocese of New Orleans; of these I have already consecrated one, and shall consecrate another in a short while."<sup>4</sup>

---

4 From Rosati's letter to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda.

## CHAPTER 3

### PROGRESS OF A DECADE •

After the visitation and confirmation trip in Louisiana, Bishop Rosati, with energy and prudence, devoted himself to the reorganization of his own diocese and especially his episcopal city. From New Orleans he had written on January 7, 1827: "The diocese of St. Louis which includes the State of Missouri and the territory of Arkansas, is much more prosperous than New Orleans, although destitute of the means necessary for the support of priests. The Bishop has as yet no income; he has only land; but the outlay necessary to render it of value, is greater than the revenue it brings in. The church is burdened with debts contracted in building it. I have sent Father Niel to beg for help from the charitable in Europe. I trust his mission will be successful."<sup>1</sup>

The financial difficulties of the church in St. Louis dated from the early days of Bishop Du Bourg. Immediately on his arrival in the city liberal subscriptions had been obtained for the purpose of building a worthy house of God in place of the ramshackle building that had served the people for divine worship since the early Spanish days. The expense of the "Cathedral" was very great, and funds were soon lacking to continue building operations. Various circumstances contributed to this depressing fact, among them the money-stringency that hampered trade and reduced the number of inhabitants who had or might have subscribed. Every nerve was strained to put the church under roof; the commissioners giving their bond to the workmen for the amounts due them. As no new sources of revenue opened themselves, the commissioners, Auguste and Pierre Chouteau and Bernard Pratte and others who, as we have already shown, had become personally responsible for the church debt of \$4500, obtained from the Legislature the authorization "to sell at public sale by the sheriff, so much of the church block in St. Louis as was not used for Church and Cemetery purposes, as would be necessary to indemnify them for the amount they had advanced and had become personally responsible for in the erection of the Brick church to the extent of \$4500.00."<sup>2</sup>

The sale of the southern half of the church-block inherited by the parish of St. Louis from its founder, was effected: the northern half with the church and the cemetery remained in control of the trustees,

---

<sup>1</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. II, p. 410.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bishop Du Bourg's Difficulties in Part I, Book III, c. 5, of this history.



+ Joseph le. de St. Louis



and the lot on which the College stood was the property of Father Niel.

At the time Bishop Rosati made his first report to Rome, November 1, 1825, almost all the property of the church of St. Louis was in alien hands. The Bishop had no home in the city, only an unfinished church already crumbling away. Truly, the affairs of St. Louis were in a bad condition.

Father Francis Niel, the successor of the saintly De Andreis as pastor of the Cathedral, was not a man of ecclesiastical learning, but a good manager and enjoyed the reputation of an eloquent preacher. One of his sermons on Charity was reprinted in the United States Catholic Miscellany of July 1824, and the editor, Bishop England, praised it saying: "What strikes us as peculiarly remarkable is, this is the English composition of a gentleman, who is, we believe, a native of France and who has but lately become conversant with our language."<sup>3</sup>

Yet, this sermon alone would show why Father Niel found so much opposition among his people: though intended as a charity sermon, it contained an intemperate attack on the morals of the men of St. Louis. Father Niel also led the movement of establishing an Orphanage for Catholic and Protestant children.

The College of St. Louis caused its President many a worry and heart-burn. But his main difficulty was the debt of \$4500, on the Cathedral, and a personal debt of \$1200, which he could not pay. Collections were pitifully small; An attempted lottery failed to work. The creditors were importunate; prospects were gloomy, indeed, and at last, Father Niel gave way to the haunting idea of returning to France. On December 2, 1824 Father Niel was commissioned to go to Europe to collect funds and engage priests for the diocese of Louisiana. He left in March 1825, after a splendid farewell celebration. Father Saulnier was appointed his successor at the Cathedral. On March 14, 1828 Bishop Rosati wrote to the new pastor: "I am very sorry on account of the condition of affairs in St. Louis. If they (the Commissioners) could have a little patience, things could be adjusted in a friendly way without noise. Still if they insist to sell the lots and the house which was originally destined for the use of the priests, and if they want to throw you out of it, I ask you to protest and to publish your protest in the papers and to stop all ecclesiastical functions. I set my hope on the piety and religiousness of the inhabitants of St. Louis, that things will not go that far."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> July 1, 1824.

<sup>4</sup> Rosati to Father Saulnier. Letter in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

On the next day he wrote Father Niel at the College Stanislaus Paris: "The temporal affairs of St. Louis are in a deplorable condition. Interest amounts to \$2000. These gentlemen threaten to sell the house and lots, if they are not paid by May 25th, or if the contract is not renewed. They want my signature. If the sum collected had been sent, we might have paid part of the interest and restored confidence. Please answer and send what you have collected. After Easter I shall go to St. Louis and renew the contract in my name."<sup>5</sup>

On the 23rd the Bishop wrote a touching appeal to Mr. Bernard Pratte, the chief creditor, in which he praises him for what he has done in the interest of the church, collecting funds and superintending the workmen, concluding with these words: "You have just claims, you must be paid. But collections from Europe are poor. M. Niel suffered an apoplectic stroke and cannot do much. I hope to satisfy your claims right soon: but have patience, and do not precipitate matters."<sup>6</sup>

This was done on July 1, 1828, when the Commissioners conveyed all their holdings in the Church-Block to Bishop Joseph Rosati in consideration of his personal note for \$4748.28 at 6 percent per annum.

On April 4 he had made a personal appeal to Cardinal de Croy, Archbishop of Rouen, Grand Almoner of France, for help to pay the debt on the Cathedral. On December 22 he writes to Father Saulnier: "We need not hope for anything from Niel, at present."<sup>7</sup> His anxieties were relieved, however, by a remittance from the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, amounting to about 20,000 francs, intended for the immediate needs of New Orleans and St. Louis. Of this sum the Bishop devoted 6325 frs. to the Jesuit establishment, 1000 to the Nuns of the Sacred Heart, 9532 to pay the debts of the Bishop's House in New Orleans and of the rest he paid 1582 dollars to Messrs. Pratte and Chouteau, as the first installment on the Cathedral debt in St. Louis. The entire debt, capital and accrued interest, was eventually paid out of funds sent to Bishop Rosati from Europe. In April 1829 Father Niel sent 2400 frs. to pay for the debts he had made whilst at the Cathedral. At various other dates up to March 1830 he forwarded smaller sums amounting to \$2252. "If you have not done what we expected," wrote Bishop Rosati, with all the kindness of his nature, "it is not your fault."<sup>8</sup>

Father Niel had been sent to Europe by Bishop Rosati, not only for the purpose of collecting funds for the diocese, but also of gaining

---

<sup>5</sup> Rosati to Niel, Draft in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>6</sup> Rosati's Letter Book in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>7</sup> Rosati, to Saulnier in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>8</sup> Rosati's Letter-Book.

new recruits for the missions. In this also, he was a disappointment, for the only time he did send new recruits to St. Louis, he let them borrow the money for the journey, which the Bishop had to repay. Among these recruits was Father Joseph Lutz of Odenheim in the Black Forest, who was appointed by the Bishop to assist Father Edmund Saulnier at the Cathedral. He arrived November 5, 1827. As Father Francis Savine left Cahokia for the south in May 1826, the priests of the Cathedral visited his forsaken mission and also Carondelet. Father Holweck has written a very lively account of Father Edmund Saulnier's checkered career.<sup>9</sup>

Much of what the loquacious Gascon said and wrote is of no value for the history of the Diocese, however characteristic it may be for the man. He never could get along with any assistant: he often quarrelled with his bishop; he was jealous of De Neckere's popularity; he constantly complained of his "beggarly income;" he was a kind of clerical Pepys, whose letters would enrich the world with a very picturesque memoir.

The one memorable event of Father Saulnier's long life must find its record here. On February 1829 Saulnier wrote to Bishop Rosati that he gave the last sacraments to Auguste Chouteau who received them with great devotion. Auguste Chouteau was the man who on February 15th, 1764 had directed the founding of St. Louis. It seems that Auguste Chouteau had been a practical Catholic all his life—at least according to Colonial ideas. On February 24th Chouteau died; the following day Saulnier sang the Exequial Requiem; he received three dollars and fifty cents for his services—also according to Colonial ideas!

We shall meet Father Saulnier again when we come to the account of the Arkansas Mission in November 1831.

The old Brick Cathedral was to witness a number of solemn functions before its lurid destruction. But the ordinations usually took place at the Seminary. On January 29, 1826, the Jesuit John E. Smedts, and on March 11 of the same year, Peter J. Verhaegen were ordained to the priesthood. Both were placed at Florissant with Fathers Van Quickenborne and Theodor de Theux; the latter had joined the St. Louis Province in August 1825. At the Barrens the Lazarist John Bouillier was ordained on the 11th of March 1826, and on the 23rd of September of the same year, three other Lazarists, Peter Vergani, John Timon and Joseph Paquin, likewise received Holy Orders. Father Paquin was the second native-born Missourian to be raised to the priesthood; Father Henry Pratte of Ste. Genevieve being Missouri's native proto-priest.

---

<sup>9</sup> Holweck, F. G., Father Edmond Saulnier in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, pp. 189-219.

The third in the list is Father Francis Regis Loisel, ordained in 1828.<sup>10</sup>

"In the Jesuit house at Florissant there were now four priests, five ecclesiastics, a few brothers and a dozen little savages who were being instructed in their religion. Of the Jesuit novices of early St. Stanislaus, John Felix Livinus Verreydt, Jodocus Francis Van Assche, Peter John De Smet and John Anthony Elet were ordained to the priesthood at Florissant on September 23, 1827, by the Administrator Bishop of Louisiana. As they were assigned to the establishment at Florissant; the four priests there had now become eight.

In 1828, ten years after Bishop Du Bourg's arrival in St. Louis, the new diocese contained sixteen parishes or missions with churches, six stations without churches, one Bishop, seven secular priests, six Lazarist Fathers and eight Jesuit Fathers, making a total of twenty-one priests under their own Bishop. But as Bishop Rosati wrote: "We need a great many priests, and moreover a little more constancy and perseverance among those who come to work in this mission."

"Therefore" continues the Bishop, turning to brighter vistas, "When I am in Missouri, I reside at the Seminary. It is about eighty miles from St. Louis, in a parish which is a model of piety. This seminary is conducted by the Lazarists. It has sent forth, inside of eight years, over twenty-five priests, some of them natives of the country. Their studies were pursued in some cases, entirely, in others, in part, in this Seminary. The community, consists at the present time, of about fifty individuals, of whom five are priests, twelve ecclesiastics, ten brothers, and the others are pupils."<sup>11</sup>

"I am fortunate" Bishop Du Bourg had written about 1827, "in having, besides my Seminary in Missouri, a colony of sisters founded in Kentucky. They live by the work of their hands and devote themselves, almost gratuitously to the instruction of poor children, in religion, reading, writing and the first rules of arithmetic."<sup>12</sup>

"This Institution" Bishop Rosati now tells us, contained seventeen religions, some orphans and a large boarding school. Of Florissant he had written: "In the same village the Ladies of the Sacred Heart have a convent. They have many pupils and a few little savages. Another house of the same Order has just been established in St. Louis, chiefly for orphans and day scholars."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Rosati's Diary, *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> Rosati to Abbé Perreau, June 7, 1827, "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. II, p. 416. Records, vol. XIV, p. 202.

<sup>12</sup> Du Bourg, to Abbé Lespinasse, *Annales*, vol. II, p. 409. Records, XIV, p. 166.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

This convent, the third foundation from Florissant; Grand Coteau and St. Michael, both in Louisiana, having preceded it, was established in 1827 by Mother Duchesne through the munificence of John Mullanphy. It was opened May 1 of that year, Mother Duchesne being its superior. In the same year at the request of Father Verhaegen, S. J., the convent at St. Charles was reestablished. Thus, in less than ten years, Mother Duchesne had planted five successful houses of the Society in the United States, and, when at the direction of Mother Barat, she called a Provincial Council of the Superiors in 1829, she was able to report to the Mother-house a most satisfactory condition of affairs in the New World.

The great event of the Year 1826 was the consecration of Bishop Michael Portier, first Bishop of Mobile, by the Bishop of St. Louis. It took place on the second Sunday of November, in the Cathedral built by Du Bourg, now beautifully and splendidly prepared "for the grand occasion." Bishop Rosati in his Diary records the names of all the clergymen of Illinois and Missouri gathered from the various parishes to be present at the consecration of the Rt. Rev. Portier: Father Olivier, pastor of Prairie du Rocher, and Father Van Quickenborne, Superior of the House of Society of Jesus at St. Ferdinand and pastor of that Parish, supplied the place of Assistant Bishops, according to Apostolic dispensation; Father Odin, priest of the Congregation of the Mission, exercised the office of assistant priest in cope; Father Saulnier, Vice-Rector of St. Louis, and Father Verhaegen S. J., that of Deacons of Honor; Father Dahmen C. M., pastor of Ste. Genevieve, and Bouiller C. M., Deacon and Subdeacon of the Mass; Father De Theux. S. J. preached in English after the Gospel; Father Permolli, Vergani and Paquin, C. M. and Father Smedts S. J. assisted in chasubles; Messrs. Loisel and Chalon, subdeacons, Saucier cleric of the Seminary and one of the scholastics of the Society of Jesus, in Dalmatics. Mr. Labadie with three other scholastics of the Society of Jesus, in copes, were, respectively, mitre, book, candle and crozier-bearers.

Mr. Mascaroni was first, and Mr. Jourdain second Master of ceremonies; Messrs. Hilary Tucker and Isaac Walker were acolytes and Mr. Louis Tucker censer-bearer. Two other ecclesiastics in surplice and ten altar-boys in red cassocks and white surplices served also at the Mass. After chanting Tierce, the consecration was performed solemnly according to all the prescriptions of the Roman Pontifical, in the presence of an immense crowd. The ceremony ended at three P. M.

At 5 P. M., solemn Pontifical Vespers were chanted by the Rt. Rev. Portier, who at the end, addressed the people in French, the function being concluded by the Benediction of the Bl. Sacrament.<sup>14</sup>

Bishop Rosati mentions "the clergymen of Illinois and Missouri gathered from the various parishes," as one body: the examination of the Parish Records of the old Illinois towns along the river, shows that the priests in charge were subjects of the See of St. Louis. The somewhat anomalous condition of Illinois is explained at length by Bishop Rosati in his report to Propaganda, dated March 21, 1828:

The boundary line of the diocese of St. Louis to the East—to the West which is a desert, there is no need of assigning limits—is constituted by the Mississippi river; so that the State of Illinois and the so-called North-West territory are outside the diocese. If these regions were properly settled by Catholics, the ecclesiastical division might well be made to coincide with the civil division; but in proportion to the area, the number of the inhabitants is quite small, and among these, Catholics are few. These Catholics are established on the east bank of the Mississippi River. Most of the Catholics of the diocese of St. Louis are likewise in villages or in districts near the river. In Europe and in countries thickly populated, large rivers are on the outskirts; here in this part of North America, they are centers. On this account both banks of the river are naturally connected together, and would seem to belong to the same diocese. Owing to the small number of Catholics, it happens, that the same priest has charge of parishes, or congregations, as they are called here, situated on both banks of the river; this is even necessary for his maintenance, for none of these parishes is able by itself, to support a pastor. Thus, for instance, the rector of Carondelet, in Missouri, looks also after the parish of Cahokias, in Illinois; so likewise the Missionary in charge of Portage des Sioux, west of the Mississippi, visits the settlements and the Catholics east of the river. The Bishop of St. Louis himself, going from one to another of the parishes of his diocese, has to pass through several parishes of Illinois, because this is the shorter and better road. If, on the other hand, these Illinois parishes were in the diocese of a Bishop residing at Vincennes, he would have to undertake a two-hundred mile journey to visit them. For this reason, as soon as the Right Reverend Louis William Du Bourg established his residence in St. Louis, he was asked by the Right Reverend Bishop of Bardstown to take these parishes under his charge. At the request of the same prelate and of the bishop of Cincinnati, I too, continue to take care of them."<sup>15</sup>

This private arrangement of the prelates concerned was made official by Decree of Propaganda, assigning the western half of Illinois to the diocese of St. Louis. Bishop Rosati always showed a lively interest in the old French towns of the Illinois border. In October 1824 he

---

<sup>15</sup> Rosati to Propaganda, draft in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

made his first episcopal visitation of Cahokia and repeating it in 1827 met a most hearty reception from the parishioners and their pastor Father Lutz. In August of the same year he came to Kaskaskia for confirmation. In September 1826 and October 1827 Prairie du Rocher was taken into the circuit. These confirmation trips were repeated every year, or at least every other year, until 1839.

"Among the Illinois missions entrusted to Bishop Rosati's care" says Dr. Souvay, "those of Kaskaskia and Prairie du Rocher had the first claim upon his solicitude. The prelate, indeed ever kept a heart-stirring remembrance of that evening of October, 1817, when, on descending the Illinois bluffs after a harassing journey of nine days, he, with Bishop Flaget and Father De Andreis, beheld at a distance the cross looming above the old church of the Immaculate Conception of Kaskaskia; and a few moments later, as the sun was sinking beyond the Missouri hills in autumnal splendor, felt their hearts swell to overflowing on hearing the old French church-bell tolling the sweet notes of the Angelus. But much more than mere sentiment, did the zeal of God's house enter into the Bishop's solicitude. Kaskaskia, the oldest Illinois town, which but yesterday had been the capital of the young State, was now only an out-mission of Prairie du Rocher, overtaking the rapidly waning strength of saintly, but age-worn Father Donatien Olivier. The church, moreover, much dilapidated, was in sore need of repairs. Furthermore, there were Catholics scattered about, and they too, had to be taken care of. Truth to tell, the priests were few at the Seminary, and around the "Barrens" there were a few out-missions to attend. However, the Bishop would see to it that someone went over to Illinois from time to time. The first to be sent was Father Francis Cellini, lately arrived from Louisiana (November 5, 1824) for a visit to the Bishop. Starting from the Seminary in November 22, he returned on the 30th."<sup>16</sup>

Father Cellini returned to Louisiana, on his way to Rome, and the Bishop had no one to send to Illinois. But the Seminary priests, and Father De Neckere on their journeys to and from St. Louis would stop at Prairie du Rocher or Kaskaskia and the other Catholic settlements by the way. On September 27, 1826 Bishop Rosati was at Prairie du Rocher. He had started from Ste. Genevieve with Father Dahmen, C. M., the pastor of the old Missouri village, and Mr. Loisel, a subdeacon from the Seminary. He records with emotion the hearty welcome tendered him by Father Olivier, and tells, how he himself, the next morning, September 28 "at half past seven celebrated Mass; and after Mass, fol-

---

<sup>16</sup> Souvay, "The Lazarists in Illinois," in "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 310.

lowed by a short exhortation, administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to twenty-five boys and girls." Nor is this all. For he, who, as a Bishop, continued to discharge the duties of a country pastor at "the Barrens" was ever eager to do missionary work, and after Mass, heard the confessions of seven Americans living in the neighborhood, who, for fifteen months, had not been able to receive the sacrament of Penance, because there was no English-speaking priest whom they could go to.

Father John Timon preached the Jubilee of 1826 in St. Louis, Cahokia, and Prairie du Rocher, and Father John Bouillier was appointed to perform the same service at Kaskaskia. Bishop Rosati's return from Bardstown, February 20, 1827, marked the departure of the last resident priest of Illinois.

"Crossing the Mississippi, we arrived at half-past eleven A. M. at Ste. Genevieve. . . In the afternoon came Father Olivier, who is going to go with us to the Seminary. This most saintly priest, well-nigh eighty years of age, is now, after thirty years spent on the Illinois missions, quite broken by old age and his labors; still he could hardly be prevailed upon to leave his parish of Prairie du Rocher, where he lived alone, without even a house-keeper, to come and spend the rest of his life in the Seminary."<sup>17</sup>

For some months priests from the Seminary attended regularly, Prairie du Rocher and Kaskaskia. The Parish Registers of Prairie du Rocher show that Father John Timon and Father Peter Vergani were visiting the parish regularly; once or twice a month they went to Kaskaskia. There is reason to believe that of the two, Father Timon, perhaps because he spoke French better, had the preference of the people. At any rate, on August 26, when the Bishop came to Kaskaskia for Confirmation, a number of the parishioners called on him at the house of Madame Saint-Vrain, where he was staying, to obtain the appointment of a resident priest, and preferably Father Timon, who, they said, was held in high esteem by Protestants, as well as by Catholics. As owing to the scarcity of priests, the Bishop could dispose of only one for Illinois, it was decided that Father Cellini, appointed pastor of Prairie du Rocher, would give one Sunday every month to Kaskaskia, and that Father Timon would also come one Sunday every month from the Seminary.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Rosati's Diary, February 20, 1827.

<sup>18</sup> Rosati's Diary.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE SISTERS OF CHARITY

An event of uncommon importance to the city and the entire diocese of St. Louis now demands our attention; the advent of the Sisters of Charity and the establishment of the first hospital west of the Mississippi River. These Sisters of Charity were of the branch planted in American soil by that noble convert, Mrs. Elizabeth Seton, and in consequence, were often styled Mrs. Seton's Daughters. Since July 30, 1809, they had their mother-house at Emmetsburg, Md. At the time, they were not affiliated with the Daughters of Charity of France, founded by St. Vincent de Paul, but their institute was modelled on that of the great apostle of Charity. "The poor of all descriptions and ages, the sick, invalids, foundlings, orphans and even insane persons were embraced within the sphere of their solicitude and care." Another object of their zeal was the instruction of young persons of their sex in virtue, piety and various branches of useful knowledge, to be given gratis to poor orphans. This rule of St. Vincent was modified so as to include the education of young ladies who were able to pay for their instruction. Through this modification it was hoped to obtain the necessary means of subsistence, and of carrying on the main work of charity. The care of hospitals, orphan-homes, foundling asylums, institutions for the insane and academies for young ladies was, therefore, within the competence of the American Sisters of Charity. In St. Louis they began with a hospital.

June 23, 1828, Bishop Rosati reports to Father Bruté at Emmetsburg, that Mr. John Mullanphy had offered land in the city of St. Louis as the site of a hospital and two houses for an endowment. The rent of the houses would amount to \$600. a year. Besides this the founder would give \$150 for the journey of these Sisters of Charity to St. Louis. "It is too difficult to get them from France; the Sisters of Kentucky will not take hospitals—my only hope is Emmetsburg." "Mr. Mullanphy made his offer without being asked," the Bishop writes. "Besides the two houses he will give another lot with other houses; \$350 he will give to furnish house of Sisters. Please, send the Sisters."<sup>1</sup> This hearty appeal was bound to bring results. On August 28, Bishop Rosati could write to John Mullanphy, "I have received a favorable answer from Emmetsburg. They will send four sisters to take charge of the hospital."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Rosati's Letter-book in Diocesan Chancery.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem.

Archbishop Whitfield of Baltimore also gave his consent, writing on October 11, 1828: "The request you make as to a colony of Sisters of Charity going into your Diocese, I willingly grant, hoping that these good Sisters will do much good, as they do, I hope, wherever they have been placed."<sup>3</sup> On November 25, of the same year there arrived in St. Louis, Sister M. Xaverius, Superior, with Sisters, M. Elizabeth, M. Martina and M. Regina. On November 16, the Bishop notified Father Deluol in Emmetsburg of the arrival, and on the 28th wrote to Mother Augustine. "The Sisters will depend on nobody but the Bishop of St. Louis. The buildings are poor, the furniture is not splendid, everything bespeaks the poverty of the country."<sup>4</sup>

But *Per aspera ad astra*. The work of the sisters grew apace with the growth of the city, and in a few years a new and larger building became a necessity.

In his first letter to the Leopoldine Society of the Austrian Empire, dated March 10, 1830, Bishop Rosati speaks in the highest terms of praise of the Hospital, in care of the Sisters of Charity of Emmetsburg. "This is the means Divine Providence makes use of in order to preserve the lives of a large number of laborers, sailors, negroes and others, who are there received, gratis, and treated with a kindness and solicitude, which moves Protestants as well as Catholics to admiration and pious veneration. Conversions are frequently effected there, which bestow on those who came there with the sole intention of regaining bodily health, true life and vigor. It is to be regretted, however, that the Institution has no suitable building, for it was not possible to acquire any other than old and dilapidated houses of wood."<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Mullanphy, seconded by other charitable citizens, again came to the rescue, and the spacious Mullanphy Hospital, on Spruce and Fourth Streets, was the result. On December 6, 1831, Bishop Rosati blessed the new chapel and hospital which the Sisters entered on this day. On December 20, John Mullanphy bought the lot adjoining the Hospital and gave it to the Sisters of Charity. There were two houses on the lot, one of them was to be set aside for the orphan boys. In February 1830, the good Bishop gave them \$500 out of the funds contributed by the Society of the Propagation of the Faith. On March 12, 1832, Dr. Fiffin gave the Sisters a lot of ground in Carondelet, which was to be used for the purpose of giving the sick and convalescent

---

<sup>3</sup> Whitfield to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese. A small collection of Archbishop Whitfield's Letters to Bishop Rosati in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. V, pp. 237-248.

<sup>4</sup> Letter-Book of Rosati.

<sup>5</sup> "Berichte der Leopoldinen Stiftung," vol. I, p. 29.

members of the Order a place to recuperate.<sup>6</sup> The Directory for 1833 mentions the Sisters of Charity as conducting a Hospital, an Orphan Asylum in St. Louis and a house in Carondelet with twelve nuns. On October 22, 1832, Bishop Rosati makes the first reference to that dreadful visitation, the Asiatic Cholera: "The disease is spreading; there are no nurses to take charge of the Hospital conducted by the city authorities for the care of the cholera patients. The Sisters of Charity eight in number, considering it impossible to form two separate bands, offered their own Hospital for the reception of all the afflicted. The Mayor of the city gladly accepted the offer. They (the Sisters) removed their printing-press from the old Hospital-building and all the cholera patients were brought there. They were visited by us day and night with the greatest alacrity and without any fear of death. Not one of the Catholic patients refused to receive the sacraments, and day by day some of the Protestants desired a visit from the priests, that they might prepare them for their return to the Catholic religion before death. Some of those unaffected by the plague, also were converted. Whatever time was left us after visiting the sick, was devoted to hearing confessions of men and women. Invalid marriages were validated; Catholics who had neglected their duties for thirty, twenty, or ten years, were now seen to approach the Sacred banquet . . . The names of the priests who so readily exposed their lives for the salvation of their brethren are: Joseph Anthony Lutz, Benedict Roux, Peter Paul Lefevere and August Boniot. Some of the Protestant ministers fled the city. The Sisters of Charity filled the hearts of all with admiration and brought them to a better understanding of the Church. Father Borgna joins the priests visiting the cholera patients."<sup>7</sup>

It is also recorded that two of the Sisters of Charity died as martyrs of charity. On November 7 the epidemic begins to decline. On the 14, three new sisters arrive from Emmetsburg.

In 1834 Bishop Rosati gave to this most charitable Sisterhood a small house on Third and Walnut Streets, to be used as an asylum for boys and girls. Prior to this the orphan boys were cared for at the Mullanphy Hospital, whilst the girls were with the Ladies of the Sacred Heart. In 1835 six Sisters of Charity had charge of a band of forty-six orphan boys and an equal number of day-scholars from the city. This, the first Catholic Orphan Home of the West, stood within the church block, west of the Cathedral.

The St. Louis Hospital of the Sisters of Charity or, as it was afterward named in memory of its most generous patron, the Mullanphy Hospital, being the first institution of its kind west of the Mississippi

---

<sup>6</sup> Rosati's Diary.

<sup>7</sup> Rosati's Diary.

River, was singled out for a special favor by the State authorities. In 1832 some influential friends of the Sisters obtained the passage of a bill in the legislature of the State, authorizing a lottery for the purpose of creating a sum of ten thousand dollars for building a hospital for them. The commissioners appointed by the legislature had sold this lottery to James S. Thomas. It was now made to appear that the purchaser would derive untold gains for himself from his system of lottery-drawing. A committee of investigation was appointed consisting of seven representative citizens. After a thorough examination of Mr. Thomas' system, the Committee reported as follows: "the charge made against the scheme, that it affords the manager an opportunity of fraudulently realizing a great and unusual proportion of profit is not sustained." After this declaration the public looked with additional favor on the lottery, thinking that all the profits went to the erection of a hospital under the charge of the Sisters of Charity, which it certainly did not.<sup>8</sup>

August 29, 1833, was the last day of John Mullanphy's life. With him died the noblest Catholic layman, St. Louis has ever known; in his death the orphans and afflicted have lost a most liberal benefactor, and the Church, as sincere and practical a Christian as ever lived. Still, John Mullanphy was a shrewd business-man, and remarkably successful in his ventures. He was one of the leading spirits in the political life of the city, a far-sighted open-handed citizen. Brave in battle, loyal to his friends, just to all, he was indeed "A man with men, with God a trustful child." The Sisters of Charity lost in him their greatest benefactor.<sup>9</sup>

On August 30, 1833, the Bishop assisted at the last solemn rites for John Mullanphy, whom he praised as a great benefactor of the Church and religion, a generous helper of the poor, the founder of the hospital and the orphanage of the Sisters of Charity and the girls orphanage conducted by the Ladies of the Sacred Heart. The Bishop himself presided at the ceremonies in "pontificalibus," and preached the funeral sermon, stressing above all the charity of the departed benefactor.<sup>10</sup>

On the 3rd, 4th and 5th of June, 1834, from 3 o'clock to 10, a Fair and Festival was held at the National Hotel by a number of prominent young ladies and matrons of the city for the benefit of the proposed Orphanage for boys conducted by the Sisters of Charity. The proceeds amounted to \$1507.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Edwards' "Great West," p. 348.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Kenny, Laurence, S. J., "The Mullanphys of St. Louis," in "Historical Records and Studies," vol. XIV, pp. 70-111.

<sup>10</sup> Rosati's Diary.

<sup>11</sup> Rosati's Diary.

The Mullanphy Hospital on Fourth and Spruce Streets remained for a long time one of the show-places of the city, partly for its own sake, partly for its historical associations. In 1842 Canon Salzbacher, on his tour of inspection for the Leopoldine Society, came to St. Louis and, in company with Coadjutor Bishop Kenrick, paid a visit to the Mullanphy Hospital and the other institutions of the Sisters of Charity. He gave high praise to the Sisters for their kindness and unselfish love for the poor and afflicted. He mentions a department for the insane at the hospital, and describes the Orphan Asylum and Day-School of the Sisters as flanking the Cathedral on the left side, as the Bishop's house flanked it on the right. The Superior at the Orphans Home at the time was Mother Angela Hughes, the sister of Archbishop Hughes of New York.<sup>12</sup>

The *Sketch Book of St. Louis* published by Taylor and Crooks in 1858, writes as follows of the St. Louis Hospital: "The buildings are ample and possess every requisite necessary to alleviate the sufferings of the sick. The Sisters Hospital has been many years in operation and was the first establishment of its kind west of the Mississippi. It has been judiciously managed and has acquired, as it doubtless richly deserves, the confidence of the community. It is not, however, a public charity in the general acceptance of that term: the public use it, but it is self-sustaining: very many go there and pay for attendance, preferring it either to a public or private hospital. There they can have their room, their attendant, their own physician if they wish it, or the services of those, among the best, who are physicians to the hospital.

The following are the names of the gentlemen of eminence and Professors of the St. Louis Medical College, who attend the wards of the sick daily:

Surgeons: Drs. Charles Pope and E. Gregory.

Physicians: M. L. Linton, J. B. Johnson and T. Papin.

It should be here stated that the professional services of the above-named gentlemen are administered to the poor of the Hospital gratuitously.<sup>13</sup>

The patients treated in the Hospital during 1857 numbered about 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Salzbacher, Jos., "Meine Reise Nach Nord-Amerika, im Jahre 1842," p. 217.

<sup>13</sup> Taylor and Crook's "Sketch Book of St. Louis," 1858, pp. 44-46.

## FATHER JOSEPH ANTHONY LUTZ, INDIAN MISSIONARY

One of the earliest efforts to bring the Indian nations of the West into the pale of the Catholic Church was made by a member of the secular clergy of St. Louis, the Rev. Joseph Anthony Lutz. It was early in May 1827, that a delegation of the heathen Kansas Indians<sup>1</sup> with their great Chief White Plume, came to Governor William Clark, the Superintendent of Indian affairs for the West, residing at St. Louis, for the purpose of obtaining Catholic missionaries. General Clark sent them to the Cathedral. Here Father Lutz heard of their wishes and immediately decided to undertake the mission, if Bishop Rosati would consent. The Bishop was absent from St. Louis at the time. But on his return Father Lutz gave him no respite, begging him to grant his request that the Kansas mission be assigned to him. General Clark seconded the petition of the enthusiastic young missionary. At last Bishop Rosati yielded to his importunities, not, however, without some misgivings. Joseph Anthony Lutz was born on June 9th, 1801 at Odenheim in the Grand Duchy of Baden. He made his studies with the Jesuits at Brieg in Switzerland, and coming to Paris, then the center of missionary activities, he received ordination, and was engaged for the Louisana mission by Father Francis Niel, whom Bishop Rosati had appointed as his representative in Europe. He was sent to St. Louis by Father Niel in company of the subdeacon Chiavarotti and the cleric

---

<sup>1</sup> The first mention of the Kansas or Kanzas tribe of Indians is that in Don Juan de Oñate's account of his Expedition to the Great Plains in search of the elusive city of Quivira, in 1601: "Proceeding on the day of the glorious levite and martyr, San Lorenzo" Oñate's narrative states: "God was pleased that we should begin to see those monstrous cattle called cibola (buffalo). Although they were fleet of foot, on this day four or five of the bulls were killed, which caused great rejoicing. On the following day we saw great droves of bulls and cows, and from there on the multitude which we saw was so great that it might be considered a falsehood by one who had not seen them. . . they were so tame, that nearly always, unless they were frightened or chased, they remained quiet and did not flee."

Marching onward, the Spaniards came to the temporary villages of the roving Escanjaques (Escansaques) or Kansas Indians. "They were not a people that sowed or reaped, but lived solely on cattle (buffalo) meat," Oñate reports. "They were ruled by chiefs, and like communities that are freed from subjection to any lord, they obeyed their chiefs but little. They had large quantities of hides, which, wrapped about their bodies, served as clothing, but the weather being hot, all the men went about nearly naked, the women being clothed from the waist down. Men and women alike used bows and arrows, with which they were very dextrous." Cf. Fr. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O. F. M. in "Franciscan Herald," March, 1920.

Sarault. The gentlemen had to borrow part of their traveling expenses from some Flemish Nuns, and Bishop Rosati was obliged to repay the amount. Father Lutz was assigned to the Cathedral as assistant to Father Saulnier.

On December 18th, the Pastor of the Cathedral wrote to the Bishop about his new acquisition: "Mr. Lutz appears to be a zealous missionary. I sent him to Kahokia and to Vide Poche on account of the Jubilee. He is all afire to convert others. Now he has learned to mount a horse, but a short time ago he tumbled down, without however, hurting himself. He is timid and does not speak French well, but the present practice will encourage him and be useful for his knowledge of French."<sup>2</sup>

Another remark is in a letter of February 24th, 1827: "Mr. Lutz performs miracles. He now is very busy at Kahokia or at Vide Poche. He has effected several reconciliations."<sup>3</sup>

But Father Lutz had the consuming zeal of youth and of a romantic turn of mind: he conceived it to be his vocation to preach the Gospel to the savage children of the forest and prairie. Chateaubriand's glowing descriptions of the noble red men in *Atala* and *Rene* had cast a glamour over American scenery and life. Father Lutz's impressionable nature dreamt of the wonderful things that might be accomplished among the unspoiled children of nature. Bishop Rosati was not unwilling to send him, but in company of another priest. Saulnier writes on July 2nd, 1827: "Mr. Lutz is well satisfied, since you will let him go to the savages. He is zealous, but, as you say, needs a companion. It seems, he does all things '*primo motu, sed sine nimia prudentia*' (on the spur of the moment, but without much prudence). He has some peculiarities, which very much betray his youth. He is only twenty-four years of age. Perhaps he is so peculiar, because he is a typical German."<sup>4</sup>

Everybody at St. Louis knew by this time that the ambition of Father Lutz was to be a missionary to the Indians. On March 1, 1828, Father Bouillier, C.M., wrote to the Vicar-General of Lyons: "At St. Louis there is a priest who for quite a length of time has been begging Monseigneur Rosati to send him into the Indian Mission. His name is Lutz; he is full of glowing zeal. He has presented himself to General Clarke of St. Louis, who is superintendent of the affairs of the savages with the government. Hardly had the redskins heard of this, when they begged him to come to them. They assured him that they would respect him in every way, that, when out hunting, they would give him the best pieces of meat. The saintly priest, touched by their good will, does not cease beseeching Monsigneur to consent and permit

<sup>2</sup> Saulnier to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

him to go. I believe, Monseigneur will give him permission when he returns to St. Louis. He is to start a mission amongst the Kansas, a tribe which lives to a still greater distance than the Osages and whose village is on the Kansas River which empties into the Missouri.”<sup>5</sup>

When Bishop Rosati returned from New Orleans Father Lutz again and again implored the Bishop to let him go to the Indians; General Clark, himself not a Catholic, insisted that a Catholic mission must be established among the Kansas, but the Bishop hesitated: he did not dare to send Lutz alone. Events proved that the Bishop was right. Rosati returned to the Barrens without having given a decision in favor of Lutz. But, when it was found that a Protestant preacher who repeatedly had offered his services to General Clark, was ready to go to the Kansas Indians, Lutz hurried to the Barrens and on the very day when the cornerstone of the new church was blessed, July 23rd, Father Lutz was given the major faculties for the Indian Mission. The same day Lutz hastened back to St. Louis: His appointment was dated from the Barrens, July 23rd, 1828:

“As you have manifested to us from the very first day of your coming to St. Louis your ardent desire of devoting yourself to the salvation of the indigenous tribes that wander through the forests of this vast diocese; and as Divine Providence seems now to open a way to the conversion of the nation called the Kansas, we, in accordance with your fervent wish, and knowing you well qualified as to the science, prudence and doctrine necessary for this undertaking, send you as messenger of the Gospel to the aforementioned people and appoint you as missionary of that and of the neighboring tribes, giving you the necessary faculties *arbitrio nostro valituras*. In the meantime, we humbly pray the Supreme Pastor of souls that he may deign to accompany you on your journey with His all-powerful grace, sustain you in your undertaking and give abundant fruit to your labors.”<sup>6</sup>

Father Lutz was only 26 years old when he set out for the land of the Kansas. Father Saulnier in his letter to Bishop Rosati expressed grave doubts as to the young man's qualifications. Not very robust physically, of a lively disposition, impatient of contradiction, and lacking in perseverance. Father Lutz, indeed was not the man to make an ideal missionary among savages; yet, though his zeal outran his discretion, he certainly deserves credit for his good will and for the results obtained. On July 30, 1828, the young and enthusiastic apostle of the Kansas started in company of the Indian Agent, Baronet Vasquez, and several others, for his destination near the mouth of the Kansas

---

<sup>5</sup> “Annales de l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi,” vol. III, c. 18, pp. 519 and 520.

<sup>6</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

River. Baronet Vasquez<sup>7</sup> was a Catholic. The great influence of this gentlemen with the Indians seemed to insure the success of Father Lutz's mission. But before the end of the journey, early in August, Baronet Vasquez died, and the good Father had to convey the sad news to the family of the departed. The Chouteaus had a great trading establishment on the Kansas River. They, too, were Catholics, and most of their employes also. Father Lutz speaks of the morals of these frontiersmen in rather harsh terms. Of the savages his opinion was even worse, so much so that he declined for the present to confer baptism on any adult among them saying "that they must first be made human beings, then members of Christ's body." As far as we know, Father Lutz sent three letters from the Kansas mission to Bishop Rosati. The first of these seems to be lost. It contained an account of the death of the Indian Agent, Baronet Vasquez. The opening of the second letter, dated September 28, 1828, alludes to this unfortunate circumstance. This second letter is of utmost importance and interest. It is, in the words of Father Garraghan, "the earliest record extant of the exercise of the Catholic ministry along the Kansas River."<sup>8</sup> It is dated from the Territory of the Kansas Indians, and the river of the same name, September 28, 1828, and addressed to Bishop Rosati. It reads like one of the old Jesuit Relations and gives the clearest possible view of what transpired among this heathen Kansas in those shadowy days of 1828:

"Your Grace must realize that, owing to the great distance between the settlements here, it is very difficult to send letters from this country. The agent's house, where I fixed my residence is on the banks of the Kansas River sixty-five miles from the former home of the late Mr. Vasquez. The little towns, however, which supply mailing facilities, are more than fifteen miles away. Therefore, when we wish this thing to be done, we have either to take our letters there ourselves or send them by a trusted messenger. One of these towns is named Liberty, the other Independence. The latter town is situated on our side of the Missouri River, the former on the opposite side. . . . The town of Liberty I was not as yet able to visit, but in a little while I can and must do so, as I am resolved to see the entire surrounding region. Independence I have visited but once, and at times I have sent messengers there for my mail, if there was any. Camp Leavenworth, which is 35 miles from our home, has no service of public conveyances, so that its inhabitants are forced to send their mail to Liberty, a distance of 36 miles. Considering these facts, you will certainly not blame me if you

---

7 Baronet Vasquez, son of Benito Vasquez, of St. Louis, was of Spanish extraction.

8 Garraghan, "Catholic Beginnings in Kansas City," p. 27, note 24.

should fail to receive a letter from me. . . In regard to this preliminary visit to the country of the Indians, it must be confessed that it was altogether necessary. I myself feel deeply its various advantages. I will relate them briefly: It is there I began to learn the very alphabet of apostolical life, to accustom the body to its hardships, and to put a correct estimate on the greatness as well as the excellance of my office; then to know the Indian ways of living, their mode of feeling and their superstitions, the various conditions of these regions and the distance between places; to understand the characters of the various persons with whom I certainly or probably may have to live, to decide what persons should be consulted, what persons avoided by me, who of them are of good will, who of evil disposition. I also learned the peculiarities of the Kansas dialect, wherein it seemed different from our idioms, and what special difficulties it offered; lastly, I was helped to decide where the missionary's residence should be established, what provisions could be made for their sustenance, and what matters we should lay before the civil authorities. I hope and wish that an occasion may be offered when I can speak to you about these matters.

Now permit me to recount in detail how my time in these parts was passed. I departed from St. Louis on July 30th; on August 12th I arrived at the former home of Mr. Vasquez, the Indian agent, where I remained five days before starting for the Kansas River; on August 19th I reached the house erected by the government on the banks of the Kansas River. On August 20 I had the first interview with the chief of the Kansas nation; on August 24, I, together with an interpreter, visited the family of the chief and other families, sixteen in number, living only about two miles from our stopping place; and this I did several times. On September 17th I obtained my fervent wish of organizing a meeting with the barbarians. On September 18th, I set out for Camp Leavenworth, where I remained six days, certainly longer than I had intended. On October 1st I will return to the home of Mrs. Vasquez, as I find no means of subsistence here, and the Kansas tribe, with the exception of three families, has already gone on its hunting excursion. These things here mentioned in a general way, you may be pleased to read at greater length. The house of the agent, Vasquez, on the banks of the Missouri River, was heretofore considered the meeting place of the Indians, but now, after his death, the visits of the Indians are becoming less frequent, the house of the new agent having been established elsewhere, I believe on the Kansas River. The widow Vasquez still resides at the old house. She is a matron of great piety. She has a small family, but a well-educated one; she takes good care of me, almost as if I were one of the children of the household, providing me with the necessaries of life on my journey; she shines forth with good example in frequenting the sacraments and prac-

ting devotion; and she edifies her family with her virtues. Not so the other Catholics, alas! that live in the neighborhood. They are "slothful bellies," not much different from the Cretans, addicted to drink and much talking, ignorant, to pass over in silence the rest of their vices. I except two or three persons from this charge. Some of them live with Indian concubines, refusing the grace which is offered to them by my ministry. Only two could I prevail upon to dismiss their concubines and contract in legitimate marriages. The third one tried to deceive me, but in vain. . .

"I leave this corner of the earth with no small regret, but I feel a stronger impulse towards the Barbarians, and I desire to arrive among them as early as possible, as it is to be feared that, through a longer delay I might find the chief of the nation (Nombe-ware, i. e., the Furious, or Moushouska, White Plume), no longer among the living. Having been ailing for a long time he began to carry things to extremes, and that in a two-fold manner. Indignant at the evils that had befallen him, White Plume, armed with a pistol, rushed forth and threatening death to God, directed a shot towards heaven, exclaiming, "Oh, would that I had destroyed thee this time for having sent so many evils to my family and to my whole nation!" (During the past year about 180 of the Kansas tribe, together with the chief's principal wife, two sons and many other members of his family, were taken by death). As White Plume's illness became worse, he repented of his word and deed and earnestly asked forgiveness from Heaven. But God delayed hearing the prayer of the sick man and willed that the barbarian should begin to improve in health only two days before my advent. White Plume was hardly notified of my coming when he gathered all his strength and had himself placed on a horse, in order to welcome the Taboseo<sup>9</sup> (the name by which he always addressed me). I was greatly surprised at seeing him enter my room, especially as rumors were current that he had died. I ran to meet him, and as he seemed to stagger, I supported him with my hand, offered him a chair and pressed his proffered hand. He that was wont to speak with stentorian voice now gave forth such a gentle whisper that the meaning of his words could hardly be gathered by the interpreters: "O, my Father, you are welcome. At last you are here whom I have so long desired. I am happy; but I would rejoice still more if I could celebrate your coming in perfect health. May the Great Healer (Washkanta), I pray, restore my health. It is my intention to assist you in all things that you wish to do among the Kansas. My only son (the others had all died), I will send to be educated by you as soon as you have a home. In the same way all the chiefs of our

---

<sup>9</sup> The Taboseo is the Kansas word for Black Gown, or Black Robe, meaning the Catholic priest. "Washkanta" also Wakonda, is the Great Spirit.

nation in my obedience shall act towards you. How long will you stay with us? When will you house? Remember this: Do not have your house too far away from mine. The nearer it is the more it will please me, so that I may consult with you in the government of the Kansas. I am not able to talk with you very long to-day, my voice having become so weakened; but I am expecting our hunters, who will bring me buffalo meat, with which I can regain strength." Knowing full well what authority this great chief wielded among his people and how necessary it was for the prosperous course of my undertaking, I determined to leave no stone unmoved in order to restore his health. I wanted to give him medicine, to keep him in my house and to take watchful care of the sick man, but prudence objected to all those things; if he should die using my medicines this whole wild and superstitious nation would blame me. The two interpreters, who stood by, seemed to hint at the same thing. I, therefore, superseded the medicine with a goblet of rich wine, after drinking which the chief said that it had warmed his stomach, and begged earnestly that after a few days I should send him another specimen of the same medicine. This I readily promised to do.<sup>10</sup>

"Returning home he sent ten messengers, men and women, in various directions, to meet the hunters and to announce the coming of Tabosco. They smoked in honor of Tabosco on the whole journey, they sang and shouted for joy. At last the inhabitants of the four villages arrived from their long journey and brought heaps of buffalo meat. White Plume overflows with vigor, enjoying as perfect health as he did when he was most robust. Two chiefs brought me a very large portion of buffalo meat, and they stood wondering at me eating of it, although it was not cooked. "Behold," one said, "Tabosco has no aversion to us. He is not squeamish and delicate, as the Fathers of the Osages," (meaning thereby the Protestant missionaries). "Do you not see in his eyes how he loves us, how affable he is," said one to another in a low voice. They desired to spend the night in my bedroom, and I readily obliged

---

<sup>10</sup> As to the Indian hero whom Father Lutz restored to health by a generous draught of rich wine, we have a pleasant account in 1832: Washington Irving, in his "*Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U. S. A., in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West*" says: "White Plume gave proofs of having acquired some of the lights of civilization from his proximity to the whites, as was evinced in his knowledge of driving a bargain. He required hard cash in return for some corn with which he supplied the worthy captain and left the latter at a loss which most to admire, his native chivalry as a brave, or his acquired adroitness as a trader." From the same account it appears that the Kansas had begun to raise corn, but had not left off their hunting excursions. White Plume was still inhabiting the great stone house on the Kansas River, "A palace without, a wigwam within" as Irving says. The Kansas were still at war with the Pawnees.

them. Like two satellites they enclosed me, lying on the floor in the middle of my room, one on my right side, the other on my left. With great big eyes they looked at me performing my morning prayers. They hardly dared to breathe. Having returned home the next day, White Plume visited me once more. But he now spoke in loud tones, talking much of his joy and that of the entire tribe and asking many questions. He inquired attentively of Tabosco, what is the purpose of his mission, what are the causes which led him to stay with them four months of this year, what education he would give the children, and what obedience would be required. At last I suggested that I desired very much he should, as opportunity offered, convoke the other Kansas to whom I could then explain the things I had at heart. He answered that this could hardly be done before the middle of September, because not all would be back from their hunting excursion before that time. It would seem more satisfactory, he said, to select the time when they would come together for the Government's annual distribution of gifts. I acquiesced and dismissed the man. I then began to cut the timbers and to adorn the chapel. When I had finished this work I took care to examine the country and to consider what I must build if I should happen to come to reside here. White Plume now visited me for the third time: "Write," he said, "to Red Hair (General W. Clark), that as Vasquez is dead, he should send us another agent who will properly attend to our affairs. We do not want an American. We ask for a Frenchman, certainly none other than Cyprian or Francis Chouteau. The five other chiefs of the Kansas are likewise in favor of these two. Sign my name and the names of these, and urge at the same time your own undertaking, so that you can more easily and more quickly come to stay with us. I have great hopes that our nation will, by your help, be shortly changed for the better."

"I wrote immediately commending their request and my own to the Governor and, impatient of delay, I expected the new agent from day to day. And, behold, there arrived Mr. Dunnay McNair,<sup>11</sup> a youth of about twenty years sent by Governor Clark, who has no little confidence in the young man. He is to take the place of the agent with the Kansas. Governor Clark, having been advised by me of the death of Mr. Vasquez, had immediately appointed him, not having as yet received my first letter. The young man is a Catholic of good morals, and endowed with sufficient knowledge, sincere and prudent, a friend and defender of religion, most attentive to his work, and friendly to me.

---

<sup>11</sup> Dunnay McNair, son of the first Governor of Missouri, Alexander McNair, was a Catholic, although his father probably never became affiliated with the church. Cf. Edward Brown's *Sketch of the Life of Alexander McNair*, in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 231 ss.

We do not yet know whether he will be agent with full power or not. He helps me very much by his authority and his kindness. He frequently says that nothing is to be despaired of (*nil desperandum*,) under the auspices of Governor Clark, who really takes great interest in the success of the mission, and he assures me that the sale of thirty-six sections of land will certainly be held in the month of October or November, and then our work could be begun. The vice-agent requested White Plume to call an assembly of the Indians, telling them that he wished to explain some matters to them in council. The messengers go out and call together the warriors of four of the villages. The third day after the call had gone out about two hundred and forty Indians from the surrounding country came there and listened to what the vice-agent might proclaim. For the whole day the Kansas remain in session. The medals are distributed and the laws and the treaties are explained, the thieves are whipped, and the cultivation of the land is urgently recommended, and the permanent location in one village is demanded. The Tabosco is presented to them. The annual distribution is promised when the Kansas shall assemble at Fort Leavenworth, and many other things are approved. The barbarians agreed with almost everything except the plan of permanently locating in one village, and abandoning their hunting life. Rumors, clamors and complaints arose, in vain. With all my strength I urged the necessity of the matter contained in the first point (uniting the tribe in one village), and I argued against the foolish and destructive plan adopted by them, to remove their home a hundred and fifty miles from our house. This, a large party among them had decided on, against the wishes of White Plume, at the very time that they returned from their hunting grounds, and had seen for the first time the elegant place offering such various conveniences. They now understand how proper and useful it would be to unite in one village, where all their tents should be fixed. The place selected at a distance of about one day's journey, was approved by all with the exception of a few stiff-necked people, who, however, have to follow the crowd. After having visited, as I hope to do, the four villages, I will examine the proposed location and describe it in my next letter.

The agent now having finished what he wished to propose, I arose and demanded in a loud voice that all should remain the next day, also as I had some things to announce to them. The next day at 8 o'clock all were gathered in the chapel, which is as large as the study hall in St. Louis College. They all assembled at the ringing of the bell. Those present were the new agent, two interpreters, three other Catholics; a large altar, beautifully ornamented, the picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the middle of the altar, on the right side a large crucifix, on the left a picture of the sorrowful Virgin of the same size. The

Tabosco, clad in his sacred vestments, gravely walked from his chamber and entered the chapel. All genuflect, the *Veni Creator* with the oration is intoned. High Mass is sung. At the consecration all are commanded to bend the knee, there is deep silence. After the Mass all sit down. Tabosco stands at the epistle side and preaches. After every sentence the barbarians exclaim "How!" That is, "Good!" It would take too long to repeat word for word what I said; let it suffice that I preached on the purpose of my coming and mission, on the desire of my heart to procure the salvation of all the Kansas, on the One God and His attributes, making no mention, for the present, of the Trinity, on God the Creator and Giver of all good, on the human soul being immortal, on God the Judge and Rewarder, on the eternal fire, and the joys of Heaven, on sin and the sins in particular, to which the Kansas are specially addicted, on the necessity of hearing Tabosco's preaching, on the obedience due to him, on Christ the Lord crucified, on the gratitude to God, who is now offering to them his grace in abundance; lastly, on the education of their children, to be undertaken by us, on the raising of the Holy Cross among them, and on the visits to be made to the four villages, and the children to be baptized. These are in brief the things which I had explained to them in our first meeting. The ceremony concluded with the canticle '*Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*' and the 'Our Father' and the 'Hail Mary.' The Canticle pleased them very much. Their tears flowed in the presence of the Crucified Lord. They repeated to one another what they had heard, one the things concerning heaven, the other the things concerning hell, another the sufferings of Christ. "Ah," exclaimed White Plume, "how I was enlightened to-day!" "Wazzeche, wazzeche," that is, how good to have a Tabosco! others exclaimed. But I sigh; give me souls, O Jesus; may thy kingdom come. As regards the baptism of the infants, it is very much desired by the Kansas. This reason, besides others, moved me to promise them in public not to return to St. Louis before I had baptized all the little ones; especially as so many of them have died since the time I came here. Indeed, an old man, when dying, asked day and night, to see the Tabosco, in order to receive baptism. He was deprived of baptism by a sad circumstance and died, leaving to his relatives his anxieties about their future state and the punishments to be undergone by them unless they were willing to receive the salutary waters. Certainly, a firm faith in this sacrament, forcing others also to believe in it. At the time when this Indian called me I was detained at Fort Leavenworth. After the death of the old man the family asked me what I thought concerning his doom. Having given the proper answer I sent the greatly relieved inquirers home.

“Perhaps Your Paternity will ask, why I have not already made my home in the country of the barbarians. This I had certainly wished to do and already fixed the day on which I should undertake the journey with an interpreter, but the contrary seemed to be more advisable on account of the celebration of certain feasts, which occupy the barbarians for the space of two weeks, and which are the occasion of great tumult, drunkenness and strife. I preferred to postpone the visit rather than expose my dignity to insult. I take great care to preserve the authority of my person, never tolerating even the least thing contrary to the respect due to me. In the beginning some loose women of the barbarians began to uncover their bodies immodestly in my presence, to whom I said indignantly that they should cover themselves or go away. On another occasion, when I happened to see some immodest women lying on the floor of our house, surpassing the former ones in looseness. I took to flight and requested the interpreter to report the matter to White Plume, which having been done, I never had another similar experience.

Two warriors have been assigned to me, to be at my service, but only when I am exercising my religious functions. It is their office to preserve order and silence whilst I say Mass or preach, to accompany me and to close the door, and call the people to church by ringing the bell. This is considered a great honor and much desired by many. Having explained to them their duties, I promised to give each one a little cross when I should return from St. Louis. The name of the one is “Tatsche Sagai” (Wild Wind): of the other, “Nikananseware” (Exterminator of Men).

Let me add a few words on the location of the buildings erected by the government on the banks of the Kansas River. Fancy a valley, half a league wide and long, with five large houses, of which one is for the agent of the nation, the second for the interpreter, the third for the blacksmith, the fourth for the farming expert, the fifth, built of stone, is for White Plume. The first four follow one another in a straight line, the fifth is two miles farther on. As to the mission house, I intend to build it where the air is purer, if this be agreeable to the Governor and to the other members of the mission. The soil is most fertile; there are many forest patches all around, but not too many; but the salubrity of the air is not the same everywhere. Every newcomer is forced to pay tribute to the bilious fevers and chills obtaining here. In all these parts around the Missouri and Kansas Rivers there is nothing more usual than that the new settler is attacked by fevers, headaches and pains of the stomach. I for myself had the bilious fever five days; after that I felt well and had an insatiable appetite. The air at Camp Leavenworth is even worse. Just now there

are at least one hundred persons there on the sick list. I went there with the vice-agent (McNair), the interpreter, and 108 of the Indians, to attend the annual distribution of gifts to the tribesmen. At first I felt very well; on the third day I myself and Mr. McNair had to fight against an attack of chills and fever for the space of four days. Here I heard the confessions of two soldiers, one an Irishman and the other a Frenchman; I baptized six infants and comforted the sick. I will go there once more in the beginning of November, to baptize a number of the infants of the officers and to perform the other religious functions. I was received with the highest honors by the officers, who invited me to their mess, and in the evening entertained me with military music. I have distributed various books, of which I have a great number, treating of the truth of the Catholic Faith. There is a murderer in the prison, soon to suffer the death penalty. I will try to convert the doomed man and to prepare him for death. I have baptized at other places and at different times 28 infants, and shall baptize many more.

“Of the other Indian nations I have visited only the Shawenons, who seem to be more intent on acquiring temporal goods than those that will last forever. Their time seems not yet come. Nevertheless, I will try again and see if an opening can be made there. It would, indeed, be gratifying if I could win to Christ this tribe, living along our way in elegant houses. An invitation to visit the Iowa tribe, about 60 miles from our house, was extended to me by their agent, General Us, who also promised to do what he could to provide shelter and food for me, if I should decide to take up my abode with his nation. The next neighbors of the Iowas are the Ottawas, who use about the same language. This journey cannot possibly be made, that is at present, because the agent is now absent from home, to return to those tribes only about the middle of November. The gifts you intended for White Plume I have delivered and thereby given great pleasure to the chief. The barbarity and superstition of the Kansas tribe is too great to find ready belief. Therefore, I am in no hurry to admit any adult to holy baptism. They must first be made human beings, then members of Christ’s body. . . .

To-morrow I will go to the home of Mrs. Baronette Vasquez to prepare her several daughters for First Holy Communion and instruct the faithful in the duties of Christian life . . . .”

This letter held out great hopes for the imminent conversion of the Kansas Indians; yet the work seemed beyond the power and endurance of one man. Father Lutz, White Plume’s Tabosco, never returned to the promising field. On November 12, 1828, he wrote his last letter *Ex Agro Kansas Rivi* to his beloved Bishop. It contains

only a few points of minor interest. The reasons for his premature return to St. Louis are an early and probably very severe winter, and the hopelessness of achieving any good in the unknown and pathless country. The Kansas had promised to return home by the end of October, and had even now, November 12, given no sign of fulfilling their promise," thus making it doubtful whether the Tabosco could administer baptism to all their children before his departure for St. Louis." It seemed they were purposely delaying their home-coming. It would, therefore, be their own fault if their children should not receive the sacrament of regeneration. As to the mission-cross, I will in any case, erect and bless it, if not solemnly, then privately, in the presence of some of the Kansas.

The last month he had spent at the home of Mrs. Vasquez, teaching, preaching, baptizing, hearing confessions and saying Mass. "Visiting the town of Liberty, he found but one Catholic in the whole place, the wife of Dr. Curtiss, a native of St. Louis." His attempts to visit Fort Leavenworth once more was frustrated by his guide, who left him, *media in via*, so that he had to return home. Messrs. Francis, Cyprian and Frederick Chouteau were putting up a grand building on the Kansas River, which would serve as the Emporium, or trading post, for all the Shawneons and Kansas. "Francis Chouteau treats me very kindly and promises me his continued support,"<sup>12</sup> Father Lutz concludes his last letter from the Kansas River. His missionary attempt was but a faint promise of the greater things to come.

Disappointed, yet far from being discouraged, Father Lutz bided his time in patience. He was kept busy at the Cathedral, at Cahokia and Prairie du Rocher: but another Indian mission remained uppermost in his mind. In June 1827, a letter arrived at the Cathedral of St. Louis from far-away Prairie du Chien. The writer was Father Vincent Badin, the brother of the "Apostle of Kentucky," and the purpose was to learn under whose jurisdiction the mission really was, St. Louis or Detroit. "It is now the third week since my arrival. I have much to do, and that is not surprising: for since the days of the Jesuits, that is, since time immemorial, no priest, save the good Trappist Prior,

---

<sup>12</sup> "The Chouteaus," as Father Garraghan states in his beautiful booklet, "Catholic Beginnings of Kansas City," "were the most prominent of the early Indian traders in the region around the mouth of the Kaw," p. 47, giving as references in regard to the various Chouteau trading houses an article in "Kansas Historical Collection," No. 9, pp. 573-574. The letters of Father Lutz from the country of the Kansas contain a few scathing denunciations of treacherous, lying and stealing white trash he met on his excursions. Of the Chouteaus themselves he speaks in the highest terms of respect.

made his appearance at Prairie du Chien."<sup>13</sup> The letter was forwarded to Bishop Rosati, who answered it on August 5, 1827, granting the necessary faculties.

After witnessing the most horrible scenes of cruelty of an Indian uprising around Prairie du Chien Father Badin proceeded to Galena, in the Fever River country and thence returned to Green Bay by way of St. Louis. In the following year he returned to Galena and Prairie du Chien. The lead mines of Galena, in the extreme northwestern corner of Illinois had been discovered at the beginning of the eighteenth Century, and in consequence a settlement had sprung up which, at this time, was attracting great numbers of men. "During the year 1825 to 1827," as Father Holweck states on excellent authority, "thousands of persons came from Missouri and Illinois to work in the diggings. In 1827 there were six or seven thousand miners in the country around Galena. The principal town was the Irish-American settlement of Galena; nearby was a Creole town, called Gratiot Grove, the leading men there being the Gratiots from St. Louis. Many of these miners made it a practice to run up the Mississippi by boat, work in the mines during the summer and return to their homes at the approach of winter."<sup>14</sup> A population of such a character is not the best material for building up a substantial congregation. Still, on April 27th, 1827, five Irish Catholics from Galena who had come from Pennsylvania, sent a petition for a resident priest to Bishop Rosati. Their names were Patrick Walsh, Patrick Hogan, James and Patrick Foley and Michael Byrne. Two days later the same men sent another petition to Father Rafferty at Brownsville, Pennsylvania, to be transmitted by him to the proper authorities. They were not sure to which diocese the Fever River district belonged. Rafferty forwarded the document to Bishop Rosati of St. Louis. The Bishop answered, that he was truly delighted to see the great zeal they had shown for their religion: and he hoped that God would grant them what they urgently desired, but that he had no priest to spare at present. They had, as he knew, but lately received a visit from Father Badin. But the good Irishmen at Galena wanted a resident priest who could preach to them in their language, and Father Badin fulfilled neither the one nor the other condition: they accordingly once more petitioned "the Bishop of St. Louis and Administrator of Fever River, State of Illinois," for a resident clergyman, competent to preach in the English language, promising him a salary of five hundred dollars a year, and such other

---

<sup>13</sup> Badin to Rosati, in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese, printed in "North-eastern Part of Diocese of St. Louis under Bishop Rosati," "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol II, p. 185.

<sup>14</sup> Holweck, Abbé Lutz in St. Louis "Pastoral-Blatt," Sept. 1917.

perquisites as by custom he may be entitled. They also pledged themselves to build a decent church, and other buildings for his private accommodation, as their circumstances will afford." The petition bears three names: all Irish—Thomas Gray, Michael Finnely and Patrick Doyle. Bishop Rosati answered this appeal by a promise to get a priest for them from Europe.<sup>15</sup>

Bishop Rosati, the very next day, wrote a letter to Cardinal Cappelari, the Prefect of the Propaganda: "I received lately a letter written in the name of two hundred Catholics of Galena, a town about five hundred miles north of St. Louis. These poor people, who are destitute of all spiritual help, ask for an English speaking priest. I beseech Your Eminence most earnestly to send to this diocese, either from the College of Propaganda, or from the Irish College, two priests who can speak English: for at present, I have absolutely no means to provide for the spiritual needs of so many Catholics."<sup>16</sup> As this request and two succeeding ones did not elicit a favorable response, Bishop Rosati looked around among his clergy for a priest who could supply the most urgent need until the proper person should be found.

In the Spring of 1828, Father Badin unexpectedly came back to the mining camp. He did not feel at home, however, among the Irish, nor did they conceive a particular love for him. So, in summer, 1828, he left the district in disgust and went to Prairie du Chien. During the entire year 1829 and the spring and summer of 1830 no priest came to Fever River.

On November 9th, 1828, nineteen families of Sangamon City, Ill., petitioned Bishop Rosati for a priest. They had moved to the fertile soil of that region from Kentucky. Bishop Flaget had directed them to look to Bishop Rosati for spiritual help.

At last, the good prelate yielded to the importunities of his spiritual children and gave Father Lutz the major faculties for the Northwestern district of his diocese and sent him to Sangamon, Galena and Prairie du Chien. The missionary went to Galena by steamboat and arrived there toward the end of September. On September 26th, he said Mass for the first time in the house of Mr. Soulard. He made a brief visit to Gratiot Grove, a settlement of French Creoles, about fifteen miles distant from Galena. As the Creoles, with the exception of Soulard and Gratiot, were poor, he had to rely mainly upon the Irish for his support. Owing to the disturbed condition of the country, he did not visit Prairie du Chien as he had proposed to do.

---

<sup>15</sup> The originals of these petitions are in the Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>16</sup> Rosati to the Prefect of the Propaganda, draft of letter in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

On his return trip by land Father Lutz paid flying visits to the Catholics of Peoria and Sangamon City (Springfield) and arrived at St. Louis about November 14th, weary and exhausted, but hopeful still.

In the Spring of 1831, Father Lutz again started for the North, bound for Prairie du Chien to open a mission among the Indians. He lived in a tent, about half a mile from the camp of the Menomenies on the Wisconsin River. But his hopes were to meet a sudden and sad disappointment. The incident that brought about Father Lutz's departure from Prairie du Chien is related by Father Louis Rondot in a letter to Mgr. Cholleton, Vicar-General of Lyons, dated St. Louis, May 21st, 1831:

"We have just received a letter from M. Lutz, who is actually at Prairie du Chien. The savages of four nations two months ago caused a great deal of uneasiness, but peace had been made, when suddenly the Foxes, a wild tribe, came down secretly in canoes, following the course of the Mississippi. The missionary, who that evening happened to be at the shore of the river, heard the splash of the paddles without suspecting what was going on, since the night was dark. Hardly had he returned to his house, which is situated half a mile from the camp of the Memonis (Menomemies), a savage nation which is allied to the United States, when he heard gun-shots and frightful howlings. The Memonis had been surprised in their sleep, most of them drunk. They were thirty victims,—men, women and children. The Foxes had retired before the news came to the Fort. There is reason to fear that this event causes new obstacles to the spread of the gospel."<sup>17</sup>

The terrified missionary hurried away from the scene of disaster, and started on his way to St. Louis. But at the distance of twelve miles from Sangamon he overcame the temptation and turned his horse's head north again. Although his infirmity, the gravel, caused him much suffering, he rode through the Rock River country, which was to be the scene of the Black Hawk War in the following year and said Mass at the house of Madame Saint-Vrain. Then he returned to Galena, where the people promised to build a house for him. He resolved to establish himself, not among the Creoles at Gratiot Grove, but among the Irish at Galena. It was his intention forwith to erect the buildings required and raise the funds by a collection. No doubt, his intentions were good, but he soon lost courage. Collecting, if ever, at that

---

17 "Annales de l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. V. p. 581.

time was a very dismal affair, and a sick man cannot build up a parish, unless he be inspired with the burning zeal of St. Francis Xavier. But Lutz was not of heroic mould. Besides, the general disturbances among the Indians in consequence of the Black Hawk War made all missionary efforts hopeless and rendered the missionary's stay at such an exposed position as Fever River and Prairie du Chien almost foolhardy. So Father Lutz did what any ordinary mortal would have done under such unfavorable conditions: he left his post and went home.

FATHER EDMOND SAULNIER AND THE CHURCH OF  
ARKANSAS

The history of the Church in Arkansas from the end of the Spanish regime until the erection of the diocese of Little Rock had a rather fitful and checkered course. The state, wedged in between Missouri and Louisiana has the climate of the latter state, subject however, to sudden changes. The western part is mountainous, the eastern part low and flat, and, to a great extent, marshy. The river Arkansas, rising in the Rocky Mountains, traverses the state from the northwest to the southeast. It was the natural highway of travel and immigration in the early days; on its banks are found the earliest traces of Catholicity. Near the mouth of the river De Tonti, the companion of La Salle, founded the earliest settlement of whites in the Mississippi valley, the Post of Arkansas. The towns of Pine Bluff, and Little Rock are situated on the southern bank of the Arkansas River. The population consisted of the descendants of the French settlers, and of the half savage American hunters and trappers, and scattered remnants of the aborigines. The hunter-communities were chiefly located on the White River in the eastern part of the state and the Red River towards the boundary of Indian Territory and Texas.

"In these 1,000 to 1,500 souls," says Schoolcraft, in 1818 "we behold the descendants of enlightened Europeans in a savage state." Learning and religion were alike disregarded. "When the hunting season arrives," writes Schoolcraft, "the ordinary labors of a man about the house devolves upon the women. They pursue a similar course of life with the savages, having embraced their love of ease and their contempt for agricultural pursuits, with their sagacity in the chase, their mode of dressing in skins, their manners and their hospitality to the stranger. The furs and peltries which are collected during repeated excursions in the woods are taken down the river in canoes and disposed of to traders who visit the low parts of the river for that purpose."<sup>1</sup>

The population along the Arkansas River, being for the most part Catholic, had not sunk to so low a level, yet they too had deteriorated greatly through neglect. The Post of Arkansas was the only place in the diocese south of New Madrid where there were enough

---

<sup>1</sup> "Journal of a Voyage, View of the Lead Mines in Missouri and Arkansas," p. 120.

Catholics to maintain a priest. The Records of the Post show the name of Father Gibault for the last time on July 28, 1793. On April 21, 1794, an entry states that a marriage was solemnized by the Capuchin Father Flavien by special commission from Father Patrick Walsh, Vicar-General of the Province of Louisiana.

Father Janin, after his departure from St. Louis, became curé of Arkansas, and stayed from August 5, 1796, to December 28, 1799. He assisted at twenty-one marriages, performed seventy-two baptisms (infants and adults), and twenty-six funerals. The register shows, under date of February 18, 1798, that Father Janin assisted at a wedding and he put these words after the dispensation from the three bans: "granted by Msgr. the Bishop in favor of them, after they had been married before Mr. the Commandant of this Post, May 4, 1797."

After December 28, 1799, dense darkness settled down around the lonely Post on the Arkansas, until April 14, 1820, when a hazy light in the person of Father L. A. Chaudorat, a Missionary Priest, as he styles himself, arrived upon the scene without a canonical mission. He had been one of Bishop Du Bourg's party, which in 1817 crossed the ocean from France. Ordained in Kentucky, he soon left his charge and crossed the Mississippi into the diocese of Louisiana, where he had no faculties. Still he performed all the functions of a parish priest and caused great scandal by his avarice. He remained here from April 1820, to the Spring 1821. He left behind him a memorable reputation for avaricious practices, which was duly recorded by Father Saulnier.<sup>2</sup>

On September 8, 1824, Father John Mary Odin, C. M., who had been ordained only some months previous, with the subdeacon, John Timon, started from the Barrens, Perry Co., Mo., upon a missionary tour to Texas. They traveled on horseback, and the journey, as far as New Madrid in Missouri, was performed without more than the ordinary fatigues and hardships of such traveling at that time, in that country. At New Madrid, Father Odin gave a most effective mission. Beyond this place their journey lay over swamps and sparsely settled regions, and every kind of hardships and privation was encountered. Rivers which could only be crossed by swimming, muddy marshes, hunger and thirst, flies and mosquitoes, lack of proper lodging, presented no insuperable impediments to these holy men. The desertion of their guide only aroused their energy. They reached the Arkansas River near Little Rock (Petit Rocher); from there they rode down along the river to Pine Bluff, and the ancient settlement of Arkansas Post. Their journey was full of the most comforting results, both

---

<sup>2</sup> Certified copy of Records, in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

amongst Catholics and Protestants. Marriages were revalidated, numbers of children and adults were baptized, confessions heard and many who had not been to the Sacraments for forty years, now approached.

Near the Post of Arkansas they visited the Quapaw Indians, to whom they announced the word of God through an interpreter. A rustic altar was erected in front of the wigwam of the Chief Sarrasin, and the Holy Mass offered by Father Odin. It was the intention of the two missionaries to visit also the Catholics along the Red River, the Washita and the Bayou St. Pierre, the Attakapas and Cherokee Indians, and the Osages on the Neosho River, then to return to St. Louis through Missouri. But the miserable condition of their horses, lack of money, and a malignant fever which attacked Father Odin caused them to change their plans. From the Post of Arkansas, they retraced their steps to the Barrens. The commission given to Odin and Timon, to visit the southern missions, dates from August 24, 1824.

Three years later, June 13, 1829, Bishop Rosati commissioned Father Martin of Avoyelles, La., to undertake a missionary trip to the Arkansas River. He went to the Post, and ascended the river as far as Pine Bluff; but the poor man was of a scrupulous and stubborn disposition having been ordained when somewhat advanced in years, he did not know how to treat the long neglected and careless Catholics of Arkansas. Disgusted and discouraged, he returned to his parish.<sup>3</sup>

In his first letter to the newly founded Leopoldine Society of the Austrian Empire, dated March 10, 1830, forwarded to Vienna by Vicar-General Resé of Cincinnati, Bishop Rosati wrote: "In the territory of Arkansas and especially at the Post, there are many Catholic families of French extraction. These Catholics have no priest with them, and are visited once a year by a priest of the Seminary. The immense distance of the Seminary from the place named, offers so many difficulties, so that more frequent visits to the forlorn brethren in the Faith in Arkansas cannot be thought of. The small number of priests in my diocese, and the lack of means to support them in a land of great poverty, have so far prevented me from sending these Catholics a resident priest. If Providence should bless me with means, I would gladly place two priests in those regions, where religion could make wonderful progress, and to erect there a convent-school for girls. Such an undertaking would be of incalculable benefit to the numerous tribes of savages in the surrounding country."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Letters and Reports in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>4</sup> "Berichte der Leopoldinen Stiftung," vol. I, pp. 31-32.

The noble Leopoldine Society was moved by the pathetic pleas of the Bishop of St. Louis and on October 1, 1831, sent him 10,000 fl. about \$2,500 in American money, for his struggling missions, and especially for Arkansas. Bishop Rosati now had the means, but where should he find the priest to undertake the most difficult task. Father Lutz came to his mind: but he was needed in Galena and the North. It was evident after the preceeding failures of one-man missions, that two must be sent to the Arkansas River.

At last, in the fall of 1831, the plan approached realization. Father Edmond Saulnier, acting pastor of the Cathedral of St. Louis, discontented with his position, entreated Rosati to relieve him and give him some mission outside the city. He expected to be sent to Vide Poche (Carondelet), or Prairie du Rocher or Cahokia. But since the Bishop had at the Barrens five students nearly ready, for ordination, he resolved to send Saulnier from the cultured parish of St. Louis to the wilderness of Arkansas. His companion was to be Father P. Beauprez.<sup>5</sup>

Pierre F. Beauprez was born at Wouver near Ypres in West Flanders, Belgium. It seems he was won for the mission of St. Louis, and New Orleans, as a student by Father Leo De Neckere, when the latter was forced by illness to leave St. Louis and retire to Flanders to recuperate. At that time Msgr. Rosati was Bishop of St. Louis and Administrator of New Orleans. Beauprez finished his studies at Perryville. Besides Flemish and French he spoke German, tolerably well, but English very poorly.

On November 20, 1831, Bishop Rosati ordained his candidates at the Barrens and November 28, gave Saulnier his faculties for Arkansas. Saulnier took along a young Irishman, named Patrick, to whom he was very much attached, and who then intended to study for the priesthood. At Ste. Genevieve he met Father Beauprez whom he had never seen before. On the 5th of December they reached Montgomery's, above the mouth of the Arkansas, on December 14th they arrived at the Post. There the reception was more than cold. There was no house, no chapel; they rented an old hut, but the first Sunday not a soul came to Mass, the ground being covered with sleet. Besides, the impulsive Gascon and the phegmatic Fleming could not agree.

"My companion, Mr. Beauprez, seems to be a good man who follows the rules of his profession, but appears to be much attached to his own opinions and hates to give them up. Besides, he is not very active; if the house would fall on his back, he would hardly

---

<sup>5</sup> Father Beauprez' letters were translated by Msgr. Holweck for the "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," Vol. V. pp. 40-93.

move. Although he is only a novice, he wants to be my equal," wrote Father Saulnier to his Bishop. There were quarrels and mutual re-eminations. It was well that the missionaries had more than one mission. Pine Bluff, they were told, had the majority of the French Catholics, Baraque's Landing, afterwards called New Gascony, required attention. There was really more work to do, than could be accomplished by two priests.

"It would be good to have a priest at Little Rock," advised Father Saulnier, "there are many ignorant Protestants there and very few Catholics; but the priest would have to know English well and be a good controversialist. Three priests, I believe, would for the moment be sufficient in the territory, but not two together, because the means of support are small: one at the Post, one at Pine Bluff and one at Little Rock. These three would have to teach school; if there were more priests for the school, so much the better. The Sisters of Charity would also be of great assistance at Pine Bluff, for the education of the girls who are scattered along the banks of the river, from the Post until just below Little Rock. The two central points are the Post and Pine Bluff. The inhabitants of the Post are very indifferent and ignorant; they have forgotten nearly everything."<sup>6</sup>

On Christmas morning the missionaries had fifty people at Mass. Father Saulnier laid down the law to them. He told them that they would have to subscribe for the construction of a chapel and a house for the priest, and for the support of the priest, and that Mr. Notrebene would give them another arpent of land in addition to the arpent he had given for a cemetery. The amount subscribed by twelve French families, \$137.00 for the Chapel, and \$42.00 for the support of the priest, was encouraging, especially as the English speaking people, Protestants and Catholics, were also preparing to do their part. But now rose a question as old as the times of Abraham and Lot. "I do not know yet, what I shall do, after these two subscriptions," wrote Father Saulnier, "because the settlers of the Post, as well as of Jefferson County, want to have me. They, themselves, have told me so or sent me word to that effect. I am very much embarrassed to bring Mr. Beauprez to reason, for he will hardly listen to reason, when I tell him, that we two cannot stay together at the same place; because there is just as much need in one place as in the other, and the inhabitants cannot raise enough money to support two priests in one place. Besides, for nearly six days there has been an altercation between us, and on New Year's day we were both in ill humor; I even

---

6 Saulnier to Rosati, December 24, 1831. Holweck, l. cit., vol. I, p. 248.

feared at one time that he was going to leave me, as he threatened to do so about the 2nd, or 3rd, of January.”<sup>7</sup>

But the storm blew over and the dove of peace returned. The people also were showing their really fine disposition, so long hidden under a careless exterior. “I commence to notice that, in the course of time, something can be done with the settlers of this place; they have a pretty good fund of religion, which, by and by, can be revived. I could not help admiring them, when I saw them come to Mass, these last two Sundays, from six to seven miles, in spite of the cold and the frightful mud; I also noticed their desire to have a priest either here, or at Jefferson County, or at Pine Bluff. We have performed eight baptisms; some have the custom of the inhabitants of New Orleans. At baptism they give us horns of sugar-plums (*cornets de dragées*) with two or three dollars on top.”<sup>8</sup>

Father Saulnier now decided to stay at the Post and to send his companion to Pine Bluff. At both places a chapel was to be built immediately. Father Beauprez accordingly left for Barraqué Landing on his way to Pine Bluff. Both places lay in Jefferson County, but separated one from the other by the windings of the Arkansas River. Soon after his arrival, Father Beauprez wrote to his Bishop: “Regarding the congregation of Jefferson County, fifty or sixty miles above the Post, there are about thirty-eight to forty families who live so far apart that sixteen of them are now located twelve miles below Pine Bluff, and twenty-two at Pine Bluff. Thus if all would co-operate in building a church and supporting a priest, they could easily do so. But their minds are so divided that they cannot agree. Those from below want to have the church with them, those from above want it at Pine Bluff, whilst the contending parties have not means sufficient to build a chapel at each place. You see, Monseigneur, the difficulties which surround me now. What still sustains me are the promises of both parties.”<sup>9</sup>

When Father Saulnier saw that at the Post he could not collect funds sufficient to erect a chapel and a house, he went to New Orleans in February and, in less than two months, collected about \$400.00. When he came back to Arkansas he found a check for a hundred dollars from the Bishop. When Beauprez heard that Saulnier had returned, he at once took a boat and went down the Arkansas River to the Post; from there his next letter to Bishop Rosati, April 5, 1832 is dated:

---

<sup>7</sup> *Idem*, *ibidem*, p. 250.

<sup>8</sup> Saulnier to Rosati, January 7, 1832, vol. I, p. 249.

<sup>9</sup> Beauprez to Rosati, 1. cit., p. 254.

"I am here destitute of everything; I have no chapel, no house, no money. The settlers have only a poor cabin with one room and two beds; for the whole family. Nevertheless I have been well received by them, but it pained me much, to see them so inconvenienced on my account. I say the Mass on Sundays, and fulfil my duties of obligation, but I shall be obliged to build two chapels because the Catholics are too scattered, as I have written to you in my last letter. You see my situation is very critical and I shall be obliged to abandon it if you do not send me help."<sup>10</sup>

Beauprez would have preferred to remain at the Post, where Saulnier had rented a house which he used as a chapel, but Saulnier insisted that he should return to Pine Bluff.

Now that he had \$800.00 Saulnier's fanciful mind grew enthusiastic; he conceived great plans; a church and residence for \$1,200.00; two or three Sisters of Charity to teach catechism, etc.

"It is a great privation for me," he wrote, "not to be able to assist at the ceremonies of Holy Week. Oh! for wings to fly and transport myself to St. Louis this week! But I must be patient; perhaps, after a little while, we can have all these things here also."

"But, how sad it is to be here after having been so busy in St. Louis, especially about Easter. How sad, to have only two miserable huts to serve as chapel and dwelling! And how shall I raise the money to build a chapel for \$1,200.00? Beauprez is still here. We performed the ceremonies of Holy Week as well as we could. Easter Sunday we had High Mass, Vespers and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament."<sup>11</sup>

According to his next letter, of May 7, 1832, he has made no contract for a chapel, but he has a chance to buy a plot of ten arpents, with a two-story house, a kitchen, stable and smoke house, for 1,000 or 1,300 dollars.

On June 28, however, an unexpected tragi-comic event robbed the sensitive Gascon of all his courage, destroyed his hopes and plans and cut short his career on the Arkansas River. We shall permit Saulnier, himself to tell the story. "Last Saturday afternoon, the son-in-law of the gentleman with whom I board arrived from a place six hundred miles up the Arkansas River, and passing in front of me, whilst I was saying my breviary, saluted me and bid me "bonjour," calling me by my name; I thought to myself: This can only be the son-in-law of the gentleman, with whom I board, especially when I saw him take the direction of his wife's room and notice that trunks were being unladen. When I finished my office, I went to see the father-

---

<sup>10</sup> Beauprez to Rosati, April 5, 1832.

<sup>11</sup> Saulnier to Rosati, April 10, 1832.

in-law and asked him, if the man who arrived was not his son-in-law. He answered, "Yes," and told me that he could not get along with his wife, that his wife had locked herself up and would not speak to him. We were talking about this affair, and the father-in-law and myself, when the young man entered, holding in his hand a cocked revolver which the father-in-law tried to seize, thinking that he intended to shoot himself. Meanwhile the daughter arrived with her baby in her arms; but, how astonished was I, when the son-in-law pointed his pistol at me and said: "Speak out, Sir, is it not you who gave bad advice to my wife? I am going to shoot you for it." "What do you mean, Sir," I answered; "I have no knowledge of the difficulties between you and your wife; how could I have given her bad advice? I have not the honor to know you; I arrived only recently and have no knowledge of what happened in the families. If you see me faint and trembling, it is because I thought you were about to kill yourself; on the contrary, instead of wanting to give bad advice, I am trying to reconcile you." Then I fell on my knees before the woman and her husband and making them take each other's hand and ask pardon. I reconciled them. Then the husband apologized. I answered that I not only pardoned him, but that I would have forgiven him even if he had killed me. On hearing this he wanted to shoot himself in order not to survive the shame of having cast suspicion on me. I fell on my knees once more imploring him not to commit suicide and asking him to promise me, that he would not make another attempt. He did promise, but said: "To promise is one thing, and to keep is another." For several hours he went about muttering, and threatening to shoot himself; until I told the father-in-law, for the love of God, to take the revolver from him and keep it. This was done. The affair is now settled, the reconciliation between him, his wife and myself: but I still feel nervous and trembling at the thought that I was so near death, although I think, had I been killed, myself, I should have been saved. I may possibly get sick over it. I cannot compose myself, so much the less, because I still take my meals at the same house. . . ."<sup>12</sup>

Most men would have considered this affair a trifle. Not so Saulnier: the excitement of that Saturday afternoon worked up his nerves to such a pitch that he surrendered to his feelings and, five weeks later, left his mission to his confrere. Beauprez was disconsolate. He wrote to Rosati, June 12, 1832:

"The departure of my confrere, Mr. Saulnier, afflicts and discourages me much. I do not think I shall see him again. Here I am, in this wretched country, abandoned, alone! With tears in my eyes,

---

<sup>12</sup> Saulnier to Rosati, June 4, 1832. Archives, St. Louis Archdiocese, Cf. "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 255.

I have wished a hundred times that I never had heard mention of America, never had seen it. In Europe, in my own country, I could have saved my soul; but here is much to fear. But Father, for the love of my salvation, have pity on me! take me from this suburb of hell!"<sup>13</sup>

On board of the steamboat *Telegraph* Saulnier wrote these lines to the Bishop:

"You may be surprised to see me coming up the river (pardon, the steamboat trembles so much that I can hardly write): Your last letter, although trying to encourage me greatly, has discouraged me, and I am coming up, totally suspending my will; but I must see You and speak to You; my books, if necessary, must pay for the expense of my journey. Tomorrow I go to the seminary, to let Patrick study and make a seminarian of him, according to his desire. . . I shall stay a day or two at the Seminary; then I shall come to see You, talk to You and arrange matters."<sup>14</sup>

As soon as he received this letter, Bishop Rosati wrote to Father Lefevre at New Madrid, Aug. 2, 1832: "I have asked Mr. Paillason to go to Arkansas to see what could be done. . . Mr. Saulnier has returned from there. I ask you to stay at New Madrid, until Father Paillason comes back. Then you may go down and join Beauprez at the Post. I shall give a hundred and fifty dollars a year for the support of the two priests who stay there."<sup>15</sup> But Lefevre never received the definitive commission to start for Arkansas, and on December 3, 1832, he was appointed for the missions on Salt River, Ralls Co., Mo.

When Saulnier arrived at St. Louis, on August 3, the Bishop saw at once that he could not send him back to Arkansas, and on August 17, he appointed him Pastor of the church of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel at Vide Poche (Carondelet). To Beauprez he wrote:

"I am grieved to see that Mr. Saulnier has left Arkansas. Do not lose courage I shall do all in my power to sustain this mission. Mr. Paillason shall come to see you; together you will select the spot where the residence of the priests must be established. You shall accept a plot in my name and build a large log-house, half of which will serve for church, the other half for a residence. I shall send you another priest and I shall give you \$150.00 a year for your subsistence, until the country itself can support you."<sup>16</sup>

But Beauprez became ill. He had written to Rosati from the Post, July 23: "Greetings, Monseigneur, in Our Lord:

---

<sup>13</sup> Beauprez to Rosati, June 12, 1832.

<sup>14</sup> Saulnier to Rosati, July 24, 1832.

<sup>15</sup> Rosati to Lefevre, August 2, 1832.

<sup>16</sup> Rosati to Beauprez, August 7, 1832.

It is now nine days since Mr. Saulnier left for St. Louis, a departure which I greatly regret, especially as I fell sick, in a new country where diseases are so frequent, particularly for strangers. Here is what happened. Yesterday, Seventh Sunday after Pentecost, during Mass, I felt ill and had to leave the altar at the Memento in the Canon. It was a weakness of the stomach, caused by the excessive and stifling heat. This illness attacked me the preceding night and left me in such a state of weakness that I could hardly stand on my feet. It was my injudicious zeal which caused this attack during Mass, for I catechized and preached too long.”<sup>17</sup>

And in another very long and very tearful letter of July 23, decipherable only with a magnifying glass, he explained all his difficulties to his Bishop and told him that if Paillasson was coming to stay, it was all well; but if he came only to return to New Madrid, there was no need to undergo such a heavy expense.

At last, October 7, the Bishop wrote to Beauprez:

“You may go down to Donaldsonville and then come up to the Seminary. I appoint you to Apple Creek.”

Having received the Bishop’s letter, Father Beauprez took the boat for Louisiana, October 25. Thus the apostolate of Saulnier and Beauprez on the Arkansas River ended in dismal failure.

Father Beauprez soon after left the diocese for New Orleans, whilst Father Edmond Saulnier continued for many years in his twofold office of *Pastor animarum* and *censor morum fratrum suorum*.

---

<sup>17</sup> Beauprez to Rosati, July 23, 1832.





## POST OF ARKANSAS, NEW GASCONY AND LITTLE ROCK

Painful, as the sorry display, made by his missionaries on the Arkansas River, must have been to Bishop Rosati, it certainly did not discourage him, but rather spurred him on to quick action. Father Ennemond Dupuy, who had been ordained with Father Beauprez, but remained at the Seminary for the study of English, was the man chosen to wring victory from defeat. He had some experience in missionary work, for he had attended Kaskaskia twice a month from the Barrens. He was ready to go at once. The Bishop turned over to him the \$400, which Father Saulnier had collected in New Orleans, and fifty dollars for his support. After a long delay at the boat-landing in Perry County, he set out for the mouth of the Arkansas River, where he arrived on the morning of October 27, 1832. Thence he rode over knee-deep roads and through lakes and creeks, in water up to the horses girth, and arrived at the Post about noon October 29th. It was Sunday. Here is what he says about his reception:

“Of the inhabitants some were out hunting, others were busy at the gin mill, others trying or selling their horses, others playing billiards. Not knowing where to begin, I went directly to a certain Fred Notrebene. I asked him for news about Mr. Beauprez: ‘Six days ago he came to settle up,’ he told me; ‘I do not know where he is at present.’”<sup>1</sup>

“At the first report that a new priest had come to take the place of those who had left a crowd gathered around me, asking me a thousand questions: who I was, what had become of Mr. Saulnier, etc.; then they turned around laughing outright and saying: ‘This one won’t stay long.’

I have now talked to a great number of the inhabitants; it seems they are not particularly anxious to have a church and a priest. They never stop ridiculing Mr. Beauprez. Most of them would be willing to build a church, if they could own the church as well as the land on which it is built. You see, Monseigneur, that this is not very encouraging. Do not give credence to the report, that Saulnier and Beauprez have exaggerated: No, what they said is but too true. Everything here is excessively dear. I have already spent fifty dollars and suffered much. I see but too well that all I shall have to endure surpasses my

---

<sup>1</sup> Holweck, “The Arkansas Mission under Rosati,” “St. Louis Catholic Historical Review,” vol. I, pp. 243-267.

strength; but no matter; I left my country with the firm resolution to lay down my life, if necessary. I went away from St. Louis convinced that I was going to death; so I shall carry out my resolutions; I shall conquer or die for the Name of Jesus and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, from whom I expect all, my help and my reward. Tomorrow I shall start for Pine Bluff, seventy miles from here.”<sup>2</sup>

The journey to Pine Bluff was calculated to reassure the missionary’s drooping spirit. “I found there much better dispositions than at the Post. The people are much more simple, more religious and less arrogant. Conditions for a religious center are better there. The people of Pine Bluff, which is a village of about fifty families, Catholic and Protestant, scattered over the space of twelve miles, are less prejudiced against religion and its minister: although a certain individual has raked me over the coals for all the various occurrences in connection with Father Beauprez.”<sup>3</sup>

But what troubled Father Dupuy more was the absence of all the requisites for saying mass. Father Beauprez had taken along with him the vestments, the chalice and the missal, articles not to be found within five hundred miles of the place. Besides this, Father Beauprez had left the people under the impression that he would return to them ere long.

In his letter of November 12, 1832, Father Dupuy tells the Bishop of the plans for the advancement of religion among such an apathetic people: “I shall first try to build a log house and to teach school; this is the only thing they ask for, and that they expect to be done almost gratis; no matter, I shall do it! I said a log house, for there is no carpenter in the country; no tools can be bought, and things are sold here at twice the price you pay at St. Louis. I shall build my hut, I think, at Pine Bluff, because only there can I find some land. A Frenchman there let me have sixty acres of cleared land, for seventy-five dollars; I shall have to pay to Congress eighty-four dollars. This is the best bargain I can make; and this man thinks he is doing me a great favor by letting me have the land for the same price he paid himself. So I will bring my belongings there. I shall start for this place. In conclusion, Monseigneur, please, see that I get the articles which Mr. Beauprez has taken away from here, all the vestments, the chalice, the missal and the cupboard. Above all, please write to the inhabitants to undeceive them as to Beaupre’s alleged return; otherwise there will be no end of disorder. At the least proposition I make to them, they either say, that they cannot trust me, that I deceive

---

<sup>2</sup> Dupuy to Rosati, St. Louis Archives, Review, I. c., p. 250.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

them, or that Mr. Beauprez has deceived them, that all priests are liars, for, they say, every single one coming here promises to stay; then they accumulate money and off they go. There You see, Monseigneur, how they receive me, and how I have to suffer for the faults of others. In fact, I do not understand all this gossip. I had to promise them that I would teach school in order to be permitted to buy this plot of ground. As far as the sacred ministry is concerned, I have no work, except a few baptisms, some, but very little catechism and preaching, which they once or twice come to hear through curiosity. Still I trust in God's mercy. It is useless to speak to them of abstinence, fasting or confession, or of the duty to marry before a priest or of the Real Presence. Some sometimes assist at mass; this is all their religion.<sup>4</sup>

As soon as Father Dupuy had established his center three miles below Pine Bluff, the prospects became brighter. In a letter of April 12, 1833, he was of good heart, although, he said, during winter, nearly half of the population of Arkansas Post died without asking for the assistance of a priest. During his entire stay in Arkansas, since the 5th of October, when he left St. Louis, his income amounted to three dollars, whilst he had expended over \$300.00. But he must have an assistant priest, "a man, stouthearted, disinterested, gentle." Rosati had promised that Father Bouillier of Old Mines, on his way to New Orleans, May 1833, would visit him, but Bouillier never came.

At last, to better put forth his hopes and needs, he went up the Mississippi River and, July 22, wrote a letter to the Bishop from the Seminary. A great flood had destroyed the harvest in the villages along the Red and Arkansas Rivers, he and his flock needed help. From August 20 to 22, he was in St. Louis, then he descended to New Orleans, where the Yellow Fever had broken out. Two months and half he spent with Father Mina at St. John the Baptist on the German Coast. on December 16. he was back to his Mission below Pine Bluffs, Jefferson Co., Ark. He found his house nearly wrecked by the flood. At first he thought he would relinquish the place and move to the hills of Little Rock; but he gave up this plan because he could show no title of those half fabulous lands which Bishop Rosati was said to possess at or near Le Petit Rocher, that is Little Rock.

According to this letter of Dupuy there seemed to be an improvement at the mission St. Mary's, at Easter, in church attendance and reception of the Sacraments, in spite of the "vociferations" of three Protestant preachers who went about calumniating the Church. Even Protestants came to the little mission and everybody said it was "shameful" not to have a larger church which would contain the congregation.

---

<sup>4</sup> Dupuy to Rosati, p. 261.

When, however, he visited Arkansas Post, nobody came to fulfill the Easter duty, so that Dupuy did not even celebrate Mass there.

In his next letter he relates that the projected chapel at St. Mary's has not been commenced as yet. The overflow of 1833 was a great drawback to the good work; his present chapel-house, however, is filled every Sunday. The land which the Bishop owns near Little Rock has been discovered; it is situated thirty-six miles from the town in a sparsely settled district. Little Rock itself is growing rapidly, there are also three hundred "Dutch" families.<sup>5</sup>

At last, in the summer, of 1834, Father Dupuy undertook the journey to Little Rock, two years and a half after the reestablishment of the Arkansas Mission by Bishop Rosati. He writes about this trip, August 7, 1834:

"I have just returned from a journey to Petit Rocher (Little Rock), satisfied in every respect. I found about twenty Catholic families in the neighborhood, separated some 20 miles from each other. They earnestly ask for a priest and complain that You desert them; and, feeling the necessity of serving a Supreme Being and not being able to have the instruction required they are compelled to receive it from the mouth of a false minister. Most of these Catholics have subscribed for two Presbyterian churches at Little Rock; one, of wood, is finished; the other, of brick, is not completed. In the city itself no Catholic could be shown to me, but there are said to be three families, who, seeing they were abandoned, did not declare themselves Catholic. About twenty German families had settled here, but about a month or two ago, they went twelve miles higher up the river. The city of Little Rock is superbly situated. Placed on a small hill on the right bank of the river Arkansas, the city dominates an immense plain on both sides of the river. Most of the land is laid in very rich cotton fields. All the bottoms bristle with cypress forests, of which boards are made in large quantities; these are transported to New Orleans. The people here are very gentle, but the prejudice against the true religion is deeply rooted. Numbers of these circuit-riding preachers pass here; all they do is spread calumnies against the Church. It is incredible, Monseigneur, in what perplexity these poor people are. The Protestants are mostly Deists, and the Catholics are not very far from the same condition, so much so, that several of them neglect to have their children baptized. Amongst those whom I visited, and who have not seen a priest since the coming of Father Martin, I baptized only one infant. But I am sure, that, if a priest came here, he would

---

<sup>5</sup> Dupuy to Rosati, l. cit., p. 262. The "Dutch" spoken of here were partly remnants of the German Colonists settled by John Law on his seigniory on the Arkansas River before 1720.

soon overcome the prejudices and refute the calumnies. But he will have to go through sufferings of every kind. A person must have been here to understand."<sup>6</sup>

In September 1834, Father Dupuy fell sick of bilious fever; to recuperate and make a retreat at the Seminary he took the steam-boat *Revenue*; then he visited the city to see the new Cathedral, and with new courage, returned to his forlorn mission on the Arkansas. The Bishop had promised that he would send him an assistant.

Half a year later, April 13, 1835, Bishop Rosati ordained Charles Rolle, a native of the diocese of Nancy, and on April 21, appointed him assistant to Father Dupuy. According to a letter written by Dupuy in Latin (all his other letters were written in French), June 18, 1835, Father Rolle first descended to New Orleans, then, on the eve of the Ascension, he came up to Pine Bluff, in utter poverty, "without money, without a chalice, without a horse, without saddle;" but Dupuy welcomed him heartily; for to be debarred from the company or at least proximity of a brother priest was to him the greatest of all privations. And Dupuy wrote to his Bishop about Father Rolle: "I love him, it is sweet to me to live with him" (*Illum amo, vivere cum eo mihi est dulce*).<sup>7</sup>

But the peaceful colaboration of the two priests lasted hardly two months. After a sick call under the noonday sun, Father Rolle fell sick and died July 22, 1835. Dupuy himself again suffered an attack of bilious fever and was so ill that, for a while, his recovery was despaired.

Improved in health, at last, December 7, 1835 Father Dupuy let the contract for the erection of a small chapel at his mission; he also intended to establish a school; even at the Post the settlers became interested in religion and talked of building a chapel, if the priest would promise to say mass there now and then. He even had visited some place on the distant Washita River, to refute certain preachers who "tormented" the Catholics. On Christmas, he had twenty communions.

In another letter of May 4, 1836, Dupuy relates that, at the end of April, he was called two hundred and sixty-seven miles up the Arkansas River to marry an officer of the U. S. troops, stationed amongst the Indians; he was enchanted with the beautiful scenery along the river; it took him over seven days to make the trip. The people at Pine Bluff are losing patience, since they get no school, no church, no division of missions. The chapel is commenced, but cannot be

---

<sup>6</sup> Dupuy to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>7</sup> Latin Letter to Rosati in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

finished, because nobody wants to contribute, unless they get also a school; he feels disheartened—nothing worth while can be done if he must remain alone.

But months passed and no assistant came. Now Dupuy decided to throw the weight of his personal presence into the scale: on November 5, 1836, he suddenly appeared at the Bishop's house in St. Louis. What could the prelate do? Indeed, he had four deacons at the Barrens; Guibride, Heim, Kenny and Donnelly. To satisfy Dupuy, he sent for Donnelly and ordained him priest at St. Louis, November 20, and four days later handed him his papers for Arkansas. Both Dupuy and his Irish assistant, Peter Donnelly, at once set out for the South. After their arrival, Dupuy, in the joy of his heart, wrote a letter in English to Father Timon of the Seminary. We reprint it as it is:

“Pine Bluffs, Jefferson Co., Jan. 9, 1837.

“Rev. Sir:

“I just seize the chance to write you a few words. Our travelling was lucky enough coming down, with the exception that Mr. Donnelly had to stay some eight days at the mouth of the Arkansas River. Our labors look to be fruitful till now, and everything is growing better and better. Mr. Donnelly looks to be satisfied with the place, and the people like him well enough too. I hope firmly that our hardships will be in the advancing of the knowledge of Christ and his glory in these remote countries. We are both in good health, though we have been in a pretty long and muddy riding for a week. Great motions have been made among the folks, even the dissentients, to convert our church into a school house, being too small for a church and agreeing to build a large one. As my subscription in St. Louis was a little more than nothing, I am going to New Orleans to try again. For we can do nothing if we have no servant.”<sup>8</sup>

On the sixth of March 1837 he went to New Orleans to raise some funds, since his efforts at St. Louis in this direction had proven futile. Father Dupuy wrote:

“The number of Catholics, nominal and others, does not go beyond six hundred; they are scattered in the four corners of the state. Most of them are in Jefferson Co.: then follows the Post in Arkansas Co., then Little Rock. There are four places, where mass might be said, if we had the money to travel, by using the cabins in which the settlers live. 1) Three miles below Pine Bluffs, which is the seat of justice of Jefferson Co.; on the left river bank is the chapel and the

---

<sup>8</sup> Original in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese. Father Dupuy was much better at French than English.

priest's house which I built. 2) At New Gascony, fifteen miles lower down and in the same county, fifteen families could be gathered, if mass was celebrated there. 3) At Arkansas Post, sixty miles from my chapel; but there is no chapel and it is so difficult to build one, because the people do not pull together. I tried it more than ten times, but did not succeed. 4) At Petit Rocher (Little Rock); but first a chapel must be built there, so that mass can be celebrated with pomp and with a forceful sermon. Wherefore I asked you to be permitted to build a school house and then go there . . . . . As far as the school goes (in Pine Bluff), I am afraid I cannot have it, because neither at St. Louis, nor at New Orleans, could I raise enough to pay a teacher. Mr. Donnelly is not capable to teach what is required, because he cannot write his own language correctly; besides his health is poor."<sup>9</sup>

Since everybody is crying for a school which cannot be had, Father Dupuy asks Bishop Rosati to be relieved of his charge as soon as possible; perhaps, he thinks, the Bishop of New Orleans might adopt him in his diocese, or he might retire to Lyons, his home city.

A few days later Mr. Antoine Barraqué, from New Gascony, an apostate, but an educated man who even knew some Latin, in the name of the sixteen families of his district sent a petition to St. Louis, asking Bishop Rosati to appoint Father Donnelly pastor of the mission of New Gascony. And now something happened that Father Dupuy certainly never expected. When Donnelly saw that radical changes were required, and that he could not work in harmony with Dupuy, he abruptly, August 15, 1837, took a boat for St. Louis, promising to return at the end of September. The result of this journey was that, on September 2, Donnelly was appointed pastor of Arkansas, whilst Dupuy was transferred to New Orleans. Dupuy was hurt to the quick. The touching letter which he wrote to Rosati, when the new pastor arrived at St. Mary's Mission, is in the archives of the Archdiocese. He concluded to go to St. John the Baptist's, La.

Father Donnelly, no doubt, was successful in his missionary work, although he could not, as Father Dupuy charges, write correct English. On October 31, he claimed to have a subscription of \$900.00 for a school at the Mission below Pine Bluff, the establishment of which Dupuy had despaired. At New Gascony, Barraqué furnished a house for the priest's residence and another house for church purposes. On November 26, Mass was to be said there for the first time by Father Donnelly. On January 6, 1838, he even went down to the ill-omened

---

<sup>9</sup> Dupuy to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese. Holweek, l. cit., vol. I, pp. 264 and 265.

Post of Arkansas and, on the 8th commenced to take up subscriptions for a church and house; he collected \$630.00 in one week, but he did not see more than one-half of the inhabitants. A Mr. Farrelly was to donate the lots. At St. Mary's the carpenters commenced to work, November 17; they finished it in February; it had cost \$960.00 (carpenter work); in the fall, October 11, Sister Agnes Hart, with two other Sisters of Loretto, from Ste. Genevieve, Mo., opened the school. Their principal benefactor was Mr. Creed Taylor, a convert who had been baptized by Father Dupuy.

In March Father Donnelly traveled to Little Rock, to see what could be done to give to the Catholics there a small place of worship. He arrived on March 23rd, and collected in subscriptions \$620.00 in one day. This subscription list is interesting in more than one regard.

"We, the subscribers, whose names are affixed hereunto promise, bind and oblige ourselves to pay the sums annexed to our names for the purpose of purchasing a lot of ground and building a church in or at the City of Little Rock, under the superintendence of the Bishop of St. Louis or his agent, for the use and benefit of the Catholics of Little Rock and adjoining country.

Witness our hands, etc.

Subscribers' names, Protestants

Charles Ashley.....	\$100.00
Judge Cross.....	50.00
Captain Collins.....	50.00
J. H. Tucker.....	50.00
L. M. Lincoln.....	25.00
J. C. DeBauer.....	20.00
W. Woodruff.....	25.00
Jud. Johnson.....	50.00

Subscribers' names, Catholics

Hewes Scull.....	\$ 50.00
D. W. Carroll.....	50.00
Jacob Rider.....	100.00
S. Marchong.....	50.00"

Father Donnelly was justly proud of his success.

"Thus far the encouragement that we have at Little Rock and the fruit of our day's labor! If I could but spend twelve or fifteen days in this city, that I might have an opportunity to make acquaintances, I could get a good subscription. It is my opinion that this place offers the best prospect of any other place of the description in America. The Catholics are but few, still I am discovering Cath-

olics every day and persons that were considered heretofore to be Protestants.”<sup>10</sup>

He stayed in the house of Mr. Dugan. In this house, on the second floor over the store, he said the first mass, ever celebrated at Little Rock. He visited Little Rock on two other occasions before the end of 1838, collecting the greater part of the subscriptions. But his health was fast declining. In the Spring of 1839 he wrote:

“The number of Catholics is increasing daily at Little Rock. There are several families that came within last month. It is said there are many more coming from Vicksburg; they have heard it said that there was a church to be built at Little Rock shortly. A good opportunity offers if it be only attended to. I hope and pray that Almighty God may enable you in making a good selection or appointment for that city, who will complete St. Peter’s church in the Rock and on the Rock, which I may say is now begun.”<sup>11</sup>

From New Gascony Ant. Barraqué wrote, on August 5, that the chapel was ready for services, and that it was dedicated to St. Irenaeus of Lyons; also that a house was ready for a school. As Donnelly was going to St. Louis, Barraqué sent a statement of what had been done. In the excess of zeal, he even proposed to have a seminary built at New Gascony and offered forty acres of land for that purpose.<sup>12</sup>

But Father Donnelly’s health did not improve. In a letter of November 27, he says that his weakness kept him from pushing the work in Little Rock. The money he collected was in Mr. Dugan’s hands. It seems that Rosati intended to give the missions of Arkansas, at least Pine Bluff, into the hands of the Congregation of the Missions. After Christmas, Donnelly intended to go to New Orleans, probably to collect.

In 1838, October 28, three Loretine Sisters from Ste. Genevieve had founded St. Mary’s Convent School in Pine Bluff.<sup>13</sup> Father Donnelly was delighted. On December 12, he writes that the school promises well; it killed the rival Methodist school at Pine Bluff. He now also has a lot for a chapel at Napoleon. He did not go to New Orleans, because his health was declining fast. He desires to return to Ireland.

On May 26, Donnelly wrote his last letter to Rosati from Arkansas. It brought him a happy message: the conversion of Frederick Notre-bene of Arkansas Post and of Antoine Barraqué of New Gascony. “They were the champions of this State in infidelity; but they now seem to be quite the reverse. It is said that repentance never comes

<sup>10</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>11</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese

<sup>12</sup> Barraqué to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>13</sup> On August 20, 1839, Sister Agnes Hart, the superior at Pine Bluff died there.

too 'lait,' I hope and pray that Almighty God may 'inable' you in 'meaking' a good selection or appointment for Little Rock, who will 'complait' St. Peter's church on the Rock.'"<sup>14</sup>

On May 21, a few days before Father Donnelly's last letter was written, Bishop Rosati, considering the feeble health of the young missionary permitted him to return to Ireland and on the same day, appointed Father Joseph Richard-Bole pastor of the Arkansas mission, and Father August Simon Paris his assistant. These two priests, with Rev. Francis Joseph Renaud, had arrived in St. Louis from France, November 16, 1838; all three had been parish priests in the diocese of Besancon.<sup>15</sup> As soon as Richard-Bole arrived at Pine Bluff, he took an inventory, in which he also mentions the mission at Little Rock.

After visiting Little Rock he describes conditions: "I have been at Little Rock, last week. I am convinced that Mr. Donnelly has spoiled everything there by his wild promises, which he could not realize and which are difficult to carry out. He had received 505 dollars; he bought a plot of land for one thousand dollars and with this asset he wanted to build church, school, etc. Wherewith? With the money he expects from Your Lordship and with the collections he intended to take up at New York, St. Louis, New Orleans, etc. At first, when we came, he was glad to see us. But when we spoke to him of his promises, impossible to realize with empty wishes, where there are no means to accomplish them, he changed his behavior. I told him that great things will be wrought here, because man in them, it seems, shall be nothing: God will do it all."<sup>16</sup>

Father Richard-Bole's sarcastic prophesy was fulfilled in a manner that could hardly be anticipated. Little Rock is now an episcopal See.

Both Fathers Joseph Richard-Bole and Augustus Simon Paris attended the Diocesan Synod in April 1839. Father Donnelly was not present. From the Diocesan Report for 1839 it appears that the Church in New Gascony was dedicated to St. Mary, the Mother of God, and that of the Post of Arkansas to St. Denis. Both were built of wood. Father Richard-Bole was in charge of St. Mary's and Father A. S. Paris of St. Denis. Little Rock and Napoleon are given as stations without a church.

Father Richard-Bole sold the land Father Donnelly had bought for church purposes in Little Rock and acquired an entire square, on an elevation which dominates the whole city. The cost was \$2400.00.

"I have also furnished a plan for a church, 55 by 35; but 15ft. will be taken off for a sacristy and a living room for the priest. If I stay

<sup>14</sup> The spelling is Father Donnelly's.

<sup>15</sup> Rosati's Diary.

<sup>16</sup> Letter in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

here, I hope to raise enough money for the foundation and for the brick. I do not intend to go further at present; we shall see what can be done later on. We expect Mr. Timon, and we shall make use of his presence for the blessing of the foundation, for I shall not dare to undertake a solemn blessing alone. I am expecting Mr. Timon or your instructions on his point. If anything is to be accomplished at Little Rock, there must be a resident priest here. One for the Post, one for St. Mary's; both shall have several stations and more work than they can do. How I would wish to see you for a few moments about these missions, to get your advice and your instructions, if it were possible to get some subscriptions at St. Louis for Little Rock!"<sup>17</sup>

On April 21, 1840, Father Richard-Bole sent his last letter to the Bishop:

"I shall leave St. Mary's for some weeks and take the next steam-boat to Little Rock to labor there. The people have been very negligent, and we need the assistance of your prayers. I shall now start to build the church of which I wrote to you in my proceeding letter.

I hear from Mr. Renaud that you are preparing to go to Rome. We shall pray daily that the Angel of the Lord may accompany you and lead you back safely like the son of Tobias. I shall not have the pleasure of receiving your benediction before you start, but I hope to have it when you return. You will visit the tombs of the Apostles. You know what this mission is; would your Lordship ask for me for some of that apostolic spirit, needed to carry on the work of God?"<sup>18</sup>

It seems, after Rosati was gone, Father Richard-Bole did not venture to erect a church at Little Rock. There was certainly not even the beginning of a church at the place, when Bishop Byrne, 1844, arrived there. But the Loretine Sisters, in 1841, opened a school at Little Rock. The Superior of the four Sisters was Sister Alodia Vessels.

When it became known that a diocese had been erected with the episcopal See at Little Rock, and that a perfect stranger, Rev. Andrew Byrne, of St. Andrew's Church, New York, was to be its first bishop, Father Richard-Bole left Arkansas, to return to St. Louis. The Loretine Sisters, were compelled by poverty to give up their schools, both at the Post and at Little Rock; (the academy at Pine Bluff had been closed in 1842), and to return to Ste. Genevieve and to Kentucky. The old French and Creole regime was buried forever. All the St. Louis priests had withdrawn, but, in 1845, Bishop Byrne, with the Irish Fathers John Corry, Peter Walsh, P. Canavan, John Monaghan, Thomas McKeone and others, ushered in a new era for the Church of Arkansas.

---

<sup>17</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>18</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

## THE CHURCH IN CAPE GIRARDEAU

The settlement of Cape Girardeau dates from 1793: it was named in memory of Ensign Sieur Giradot who from 1704 to 1720 was stationed with the French troops at Kaskaskia, and after the withdrawal of France from the American continent, became an Indian trader. But the real founder of the city was the French Canadian, Louis Lorimier, born in the district of Montreal in the year 1728. Prior to his coming to Upper Louisiana, Lorimier had married a half-breed Shawnee woman, a circumstance that greatly endeared him to the Indians. He was a man of considerable ability, but of little education. "In 1795," as the distinguished Church-historian Everhard Pruenste tells us, "he presented a petition to the governor-general, Baron Carondelet, for 800 arpents of land at Cape Girardeau, fronting on Cypress Island, which was granted. At about this time, Spain thought it advisable to populate Upper Louisiana as a barrier to the English in Canada, and accordingly, offered great inducements to settlers, especially to those of the United States. She preferred the latter, since their prejudices against the British, which were strong at that time, rendered their attachment to Spanish interests more certain. To them lands were given gratuitously, and they were exempted from taxation. The extent of the concession was usually regulated by the wealth and importance of the settler, the size of his family and his ability to cultivate the land; except for special services, however, it did not often exceed 800 arpents which is equally to about 680 acres."<sup>1</sup>

"Under these inducements, people from Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and other States came to Upper Louisiana in large numbers. Of these the great majority located in Cape Girardeau District, which soon became the most compactly settled section in the whole province. This was doubtless due to the fact that here the settlers found a country most similar to that which they had left, and no prior settlement of the French prevented their securing the best land. This was in reality the first purely American settlement west of the Mississippi. In 1799 the population of the district numbered 416 whites and 105 slaves. In 1803 a second census was taken, which showed a total population of 1206 whites and 180 slaves."

---

<sup>1</sup> Pruenste, Everhard, "The Beginnings of Catholicity in Cape Girardeau, Missouri," "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, pp. 50 and 51.



+ John Tenison Bp. of Buffalo



Don Louis Lorimier was appointed Civil and Military Commandant of the post of Cape Girardeau and held this position until the transfer of the government to the United States.

For a long time the members of the Commandant's family were the only Catholics in the entire district. The town was incorporated in 1808, the County in 1813. ✓

"Louis Lorimier," as Father Pruenste states, "lived in a long low frame house, which he built three or four years before the town was laid out, on the lot now occupied by St. Vincent's Academy. His son-in-law, D. F. Steinbeck, lived on the corner, now occupied by the Sturdivant Bank, where the early missionaries were want to stop on their way to New Madrid and Arkansas. Joseph McFerron, an Irishman by birth and a man of superior education, was the first clerk of the courts of Cape Girardeau District. The town continued to grow and prosper until the organization of Cape Girardeau County, when it was dealt a severe blow by the removal of the seat of justice to Jackson. It did not assume a position of much importance until about 1835, when the great increase in the steamboat business on the Mississippi gave it a decided impetus. Its superior location soon made it the metropolis of Southeast Missouri and the shipping point for a portion of Arkansas also." Cape Girardeau became a noted home of religion and culture through the missionary labors of the Lazarist Fathers established at the Barrens in Perry County. The first mention of religious work done in Cape Girardeau is found in a letter of Bishop Du Bourg to the President of St. Mary's Seminary, Father Rosati, November 24, 1820, directing the Superior of The Barrens to send a priest to New Madrid three or four times a year. Here is what he suggested could be done at Cape Girardeau:

"He may go first to Cape Girardeau, and stop at Mr. Steinbach's whose family are Catholic; there he will celebrate, Mass for the little number of Catholics of that district. I believe that at Cape Girardeau, too, they will contribute to defraying the expense of the Priest."<sup>2</sup>

Father Cellini was appointed to the mission in New Madrid, and, no doubt, he stopped at Cape Girardeau, on his way to and fro. It is probable that Father Odin and the deacon John Timon also visited Cape Girardeau in September 1824, although only the neighboring town of Jackson is mentioned in their account of the journey. Father Saulnier was at the Cape in December 1831, but as he states, he found no Catholics there.

The real beginning of Catholicity must be traced to a remarkable event in the life of the future Bishop of Buffalo, John Timon, then a

---

2 Du Bourg to Rosati, November 24, 1820, in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

professor at St. Mary's Seminary, which shows at once the denseness of bigotry of the population, and the conquering power of Divine Providence.

Bishop Timon, in his "Diary of our Starting the Barrens," narrates the incident. "In the spring of 1828, Mr. Timon was called to Jackson, Cape Girardeau Co., about thirty miles from the Seminary, to see a murderer, who was under sentence of death, but who refused to receive any clergyman. The priest started immediately, arrived at night-fall, sought admission to the prison; but on various pretexts admission was refused until the Baptist minister, Mr. Green, editor of the village newspaper and all-powerful there, was ready, with a band of anti-catholic bigots, to enter into the prison with the priest. Mr. Timon, appealed to the jailer for the privilege of speaking alone and in private to the condemned man on affairs of his own conscience. It was refused. The culprit lay on straw strewn over the clay floor in the dungeon, chained to a fastened post. Finding that he would only be allowed to speak in the presence of the hostile crowd, the priest lay down on the straw with the prisoner, and began in a clear and loud tone which all might hear, to expound to the poor man the truths of religion—the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, future rewards and punishments, the Redemption and the Sacraments. The culprit who, up to that moment, had laughed at all religious teaching, seemed deeply affected; tears flowed from his eyes; and the priest, judging the first lesson to be sufficiently long, fatigued, too, by the journey over a rough road, without eating from early morning till nine at night, told the prisoner that he would end the instruction by reciting with him the Apostles' Creed. The condemned man said the Creed aloud with the priest, until both had recited the words, 'And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord.' Green, the Baptist minister, then rushed in and said: 'Do not deceive that poor man: do not make him lose his soul by teaching him the commandments of men.' 'Mr. Green' said the priest, 'I am teaching him the Apostles' Creed. Do not you also hold the venerated Creed?' 'Oh!' he replied, 'but your Church is that idolatrous one that worships images and that gives to Mary the homage due only to God!' The priest replied: 'Mr. Green, not long since I preached in the Court House of this village on the very subject you now touch. I proved the charges against the ancient Church to be foul calumnies. You were present. I then called upon anyone, who could deny the truths which I announced to come forward and show if there were any flaw in the evidence which I brought to prove that Catholics had been cruelly and most unjustly calumniated. You were silent. Surely that was your time, not this, when I am preparing an unhappy man who has sent for me to aid him in meeting a death so certain and so near.' The minister, after

some vague and insulting charges challenged the priest to meet him in the Court House next day and to discuss before the public the merits of their respective religions. The priest accepted the challenge. The minister immediately claimed the privilege of saying night prayers, knelt with his myrmidons, and made a long extemporaneous prayer, in which, among the insulting things, he prayed thus: 'And, O God of mercy, save this poor man from the fangs of Anti-Christ, who now seeks to teach him idolatry and the vain traditions of men.' When he had finished, the priest, at the top of his voice, cried to the crowd that then filled the dungeon: 'Gentlemen, is it right that in a prayer to the God of Charity, and of truth this gentlemen should introduce calumny against the majority of Christians?' A deep silence proved that all felt the appeal. It was late at night: the Sheriff required all to leave the dungeon. On quitting it the preacher renewed his challenge, and it was arranged that meeting should take place in the Court House.'<sup>3</sup>

By arrangement a religious discussion was held the following day at the Court House of Jackson, in which Father Timon completely routed his antagonist and, by invitation of the audience, held a discourse on the Faith of Catholics to their entire satisfaction. The conversion of Ralph Dougherty and his children followed on September 28. Through the violent prejudice of his wife, the children were kidnapped by her father, whereupon Mr. Dougherty, in attempting their recovery, was confined in the jail at Jackson, in company with a man who was sentenced to death for murder. Having comforted his friend Ralph Dougherty, Father Timon turned his attention to the unfortunate man who was to be executed the next day. This poor fellow had come to the sad conclusion to die drunk. Father Timon commenced to talk to the prisoner, but found him so much under the influence of liquor that all advice was lost on him. He was not capable of being instructed. Father Timon had all the liquor removed from the jail and requested the jailer not to let any more enter the jail that night. The next morning before day, Father Timon sent to the sheriff and obtained the keys of the jail, and entered the prison before any liquor could be brought to the culprit. This poor man now listened attentively to the instructions given by the holy priest. He was greatly moved. The light of hope and confidence in the mercy of God entered his soul. He professed his belief in Jesus Christ, was filled with sorrow for his past errors, shed an abundance of tears. Fr. Timon continued with the poor man and baptized him about an hour before he was led to execution. Oh! the mercy of God to come to the help of this poor man in his very last hour!

---

<sup>3</sup> Timon's Diary, quoted op. cit., pp. 57 and 58.

Father Timon obtained Mr. Dougherty's release from prison. He soon after received the elder Dougherty and the family of Jeremiah Able, and Paul V. Sanford into the Catholic Church. These conversions roused the persecuting spirit of the protestants to fever-heat. Mr. Dougherty being in danger of losing all his property through law-suits, sold his lands in Cape Girardeau and vicinity, for a consideration of thirty two hundred dollars. "It is the most beautiful property in the County" wrote Father Timon. "The Seminary with its noble and spacious grounds and the beautiful Church of St. Vincent stand on part of it." Ralph Dougherty's father died of the cholera on June 24, 1833, after having received the last sacraments at the hands of Father Timon. Mrs. Dougherty, his wife, became a Catholic and made her first confession with great compunction and to the great edification of all present. Father Timon arranged everything for the decent interment of Mr. Dougherty, and on his return to Jackson visited and consoled many cholera patients. Near Jackson, Father Timon administered the sacraments to Mrs. Green, who, to the great surprise of all, recovered. The daughter of Mrs. Green, though yet a Protestant, declared to the neighbors that she had been cured by the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. She declared that as soon as Father Timon finished the prayers, her mother had no more pain and recovered in a few hours her usual health. On the 6th of July, 1833, Father Timon said Mass in the home of Samuel Morton in Cape Girardeau, very few Catholics being present. On July 7th, he turned an old frame warehouse, the former residence of the Spanish Commandant, into a chapel, and held the first public religious service. Many Protestants attended with the few Catholics of the town. But the Congregation was growing apace, through conversion to the Faith and accessions from abroad. "At first, once in three months, then once a month, Father Timon rode down from the Barrens, said Mass, preached and catechized, with very happy results in dissipating the prejudice of the people."<sup>4</sup>

In October 1835, Father Tornatore and Father Timon came to Cape Girardeau unannounced, but immediately after their arrival came a call to visit some sick lady, a Protestant, who wished to be received into the Church. She had heard voices saying almost continually: "If you want to be saved you must become a Catholic." Her relations would not consent to get a priest from the Barrens: but, hearing of the priest's arrival in Cape Girardeau, they gratified her wish. Father Timon came at once and finding the room filled with the children and relations of the sick woman, explained the main doctrines of Faith to

---

<sup>4</sup> Gleaned from a MS. account in Archives of St. Vincent's College, written in 1861, entitled "God is Wonderful in All His Works." Dean Pruente published a large part of it in his article already quoted.

all, and then administered conditional Baptism to her. She lingered on another day, full of joy and peace. Her name was Esther Bradley. In the sequel all those that were present on this occasion were received into the Church.<sup>5</sup>

On April 9th, 1836, Cape Girardeau received its first resident priest in the person of John M. Odin, who was, in the course of time, to become Archbishop of New Orleans. He was accompanied by J. B. Robert, a postulant, and a negro family. Under the charitable and zealous administration of Father Odin the Congregation began to assume distinct form at the Cape. The Protestants were impressed with love and respect for the holy priest. The name of St. Vincent de Paul was given to the new and rising congregation. When Father Odin arrived at the Cape, the inhabitants generally manifested great satisfaction on seeing a priest stationed among them. The number of Catholics was but small. The families then known as belonging to the Church were those of Nicholas B. Miles, nine persons in number; Mrs. Nathan and her son-in-law, eight persons; Mr. Marto and two children (all the above recent immigrants from Maryland); Bernard Layton and family, five in number, lately from Perry county; John Mattingly and family, four in number, lately from Kentucky; Miles Doyle, an old resident of this place, who left Ireland when young; John Roach, who had to fly from Ireland, being a United Irishman. (This man's brother, a priest, was shot by the Orangemen; John was kneeling on his coffin to be shot when his reprieve came from the King;) Mrs. Hannah Smith, eleven in the family, from Maryland; Jeremiah Able and his mother-in-law, converts, six in number at Jackson; Mrs. Sanford and three children; two daughters of Nathan Vanhorn, who were converted and baptized at Bethlehem Convent whilst at school there; the widows Atwell and Green; John Corvelle, nineteen in the family, which makes altogether eighty-seven Catholics at the Cape and environs, consisting of adults, children and servants. Every Sunday the small frame chapel was crowded and frequently on high feasts it could not contain all that came from a great distance. Those of different denominations composed the greater number of the audience. They expressed a desire to hear the word of God explained by the priest. Prejudice, so deeply rooted in this place, seemed to die away gradually and even the most strict among the various sects declared publicly, that it would be useless for them to erect a meeting house, as the Catholics would soon draw all the population to their church.

The catechism was regularly taught every day, even when only a few children presented themselves. On Sundays the catechism class was held,

---

<sup>5</sup> "God is Wonderful," MS., l. cit., p. 62.

once for the white children, and a second time for colored persons who manifested a desire to be instructed, many of whom became good Catholics. Father Odin visited occasionally the few families scattered about the country, at Jackson, Moses Byrne's across the big swamp and Golden's at Commerce, etc. The family of Moses Byrne have all fallen away from their religion. There were about twenty persons belonging to Protestant families baptized by Father Odin, and many others were preparing when he was recalled to the Seminary on November 3, 1836. A few months before his departure, a few more Catholic families came to reside at the Cape, viz., Mr. John Doyle whose wife was not a Catholic, Thos. B. English, George Boarman and some few others.<sup>6</sup>

Father Odin was succeeded by the Rev. John Bouillier and Rev. John Rossi. Brother Daniel Harrington accompanied them to take charge of the farm. John Hutcheson and family, together with some work-hands for the farm arrived the same day that Father Odin left Cape Girardeau. The number of Catholics began to increase. Rev. John Bouillier repaired the house and garden in a very neat manner. He conciliated to himself the respect and esteem of all the inhabitants of the city and vicinity. He had just begun to make preparations for the erection of a new Church when he was called to the Seminary at the Barrens.

During this year 1837 Cape Girardeau was visited from time to time by Father Timon as formerly. It was on one of these occasions that Mrs. Sarah Watson, wife of Wm. Watson, in consequence of what she had seen and heard at the death of her mother, applied to Father Timon, to be received into the Catholic Church. Her request was granted; she was instructed and baptized by Father Timon that same day, and subsequently made her first Communion. She had always persevered and remained a fervent Catholic. The members of her family were of extraordinary assistance to the missionaries, as they always took care of the chapel, and also of the priests, whenever they happened to become ill.<sup>7</sup>

On March 17, 1838, Rev. John Brands was sent to the Cape to replace Rev. John Bouillier. The number of adults, viz., those who had made their first Communion, was, at Cape Girardeau and vicinity, forty-three; of those who had not made their first Communion about the same: in all about eighty-six persons. On April 2nd, 1838, Mary, the wife of Mr. John Doyle was baptized, *sub conditione*, and on the same day, Easter Sunday, she made her first Communion. April 29th, 1838, the Rt. Rev. Joseph Rosati, Bishop of St. Louis, gave confirmation at the Cape to ten persons, among whom were three converts, viz., Mrs.

<sup>6</sup> "God is Wonderful," l. cit., p. 65.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, pp. 66 and 67.

Doyle, Mrs. Wm. Watson and Mrs. Geraghty. This was the first time that Confirmation was administered at the Cape. April 30th, 1838, Bishop Rosati laid and blessed the cornerstone of the new church, assisted by the Very Rev. John Timon, the Revs. Brands and Rossi. A very numerous assemblage of people of all denominations were in attendance and behaved with great respect and attention. The Bishop preached a long sermon, in which he explained the meaning of the ceremonies used at the blessing and laying of the cornerstone. Mr. Andrew Gibony, not a Catholic, gave the width of twenty feet of the two lots adjoining the parish property, for the purpose of building the church thereon. On the same day the Bishop baptized the wife of Miles Doyle and validated their marriage. May 1st Rev. J. Rossi left the Cape, and a short time after the Rev. John Alabau was sent as companion to Father Brands, but remained only until the feast of St. Vincent, July 19, 1838.

On May 29th, 1838, Rev. J. Brands crossed the big swamp to bury Moses Byrne. He found a large number of people who had gathered there for the occasion. Before going to the burying ground, Father Brands explained the meaning of the ceremonies performed at the funeral and the doctrine of Purgatory and prayers for the dead, and after having returned to the house, he gave an explanation of the principal points of the Catholic doctrine. This lasted about two hours. All were attentive and pleased. He then baptized the youngest son of Mr. Byrne and two of his grandchildren. The people of this neighborhood were opposed to the Protestants, and particularly displeased with the Methodist preachers, who had been among them, and being well pleased with what they had heard of the Catholic religion (this was the first time they had ever heard a Catholic priest), they requested Rev. Brands to return among them and preach. To this he agreed and promised to visit them from time to time.<sup>8</sup>

Thus the seed of God's word was springing up and bearing rich fruit on all sides: Cape Girardeau had become a parish of importance. On October 22nd, 1838, the day school, called St. Vincents Male Academy was opened under Mr. M. Flinn as its teacher. The attendance was not large at first, but there was a distinct promise of healthy growth.

On October 23rd, 1838, The Sisters of Loretto from Bethlehem Convent, Perry County, arrived at Cape Girardeau, seven in number, with six boarders whom they brought with them. The Sisters were lodged in the priests' house, where they remained until July of the next year, whilst the priests occupied the small house on the opposite side of the street. In July the Sisters removed to the house purchased for them from M. J. Doyle. They commenced their school in the new house with

<sup>8</sup> "God is Wonderful," l. cit., pp. 67 and 68.

as little human prospect as the Fathers had commenced their school for boys. Many of the citizens were still very much prejudiced against them. John McLane, a Presbyterian preacher, did all in his power to oppose their school, and for this purpose he opened a school for boys and girls. However, his preaching and teaching so much displeased the people, that he lost all popularity and had, after some time, to give up his school and pulpit. Both our schools increased gradually and were the cause of great good in the way of removing prejudice.<sup>9</sup>

Cape Girardeau now had two outlying missions, Jackson, the County Seat, and Tywappity Bottom in Scott County. At Jackson Mass was said once a month, the number of first Communions in 1838 was eighteen in a total of thirty-two. In Tywappity there were twenty-seven. The number of adults in the Congregation of Cape Girardeau in 1839 was fifty-eight.

On the 30th of April 1838, Bishop Rosati had blessed the first stone of the new Church of St. Vincent in Cape Girardeau, and July 21, 1839 he had the happiness of consecrating the completed edifice. "It is a fine stone building with cut stone front and neat steeple. There were as yet no pews and only a few benches. There were more than five hundred persons assembled from every direction and of all denominations. Whilst the ceremonies were performed within closed doors, the Very Rev. John Timon addressed the large assemblage in the open air on the meaning of the ceremonies of the consecration and dedication of the church, then proceeding in the interior of the church. He also preached an appropriate sermon during the Mass in his own happy and eloquent manner. A handsome collection was then taken up, which would have been much larger, had it been previously announced. Solemn Vespers were sung in the evening and Benediction was given with the Blessed Sacrament. Here again the Very Rev. Timon preached. On September 15th, 1839, Rev. J. Brands, by permission of the Visitor, J. Timon, blessed the chapel of St. Francis of Sales, and the grave-yard attached to it, in Tywappity Bottom, about two hundred persons being present.<sup>10</sup>

Thus within the brief period of ten years the wilderness of Cape Girardeau County was changed into a flourishing garden of God, still infested with noxious weeds, but everywhere embellished with the flowers of Catholic life. The three Congregations have prospered unto the present day, Jackson, Tywappity Bottom, now St. Henry's of Charleston, and St. Vincents of Cape Girardeau with its German offspring, St. Mary's. Truly the hand of God is visible in this work, that promised so little and rendered so very much.

---

<sup>9</sup> "God is Wonderful," l. cit., p. 69.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 71.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA

On December 31st, 1824, Bishop Rosati sent Father Saulnier the communication that he had appointed Father Van Quickenborne, the Superior of the Jesuits, as his Vicar-General. Father Saulnier was grieved and disappointed, and wrote some arrogant letters to Bishop Rosati, for which he had to apologize; yet his request, that he receive the "major faculties" which included the power of dispensing from certain impediments, was granted.

On April 25th, Father Saulnier asked for a priest who might be sent to the English settlement at James (Prairie du Long, Ill.) and to O'Hara's (now Ruma, Ill.) Saulnier was actually alone in St. Louis, the priests at the college were gone, and the college itself had sunk into utter insignificance. He feared that it would have to be closed. "The president, Mr. Brun," he writes "is a pious man, but otherwise amounts to nothing. Mr. Shepard is a Protestant, and the revenues are not sufficient to pay the meagre salaries: 200 and 400 dollars." He wants Rosati to send him Father De Neckere for the College and for the parish, especially for the English sermons.

As Father De Neckere was needed elsewhere, the Bishop sent him Father Audizio, an Italian who knew little French and less English. At last the ardently desired Fleming De Neckere arrived, in May 1826. Father De Neckere was an ideal priest, filled with the spirit of his holy mission. He spoke French and English with equal facility and correctness. Besides he had the rare gift of true apostolic eloquence. The people were delighted. His English sermons attracted great crowds. The Irish Catholics rejoiced, as the change seemed to augur their victory in the so-called language question in the Cathedral. St. Louis was originally a French City, and even under the Spanish regime the French language remained predominant. When the City came under American control, the English language began to supersede the French in public life, but received no recognition in the Church until the arrival of Bishop Du Bourg.

Whilst Bishop Du Bourg resided at St. Louis the sermon at High Mass was always preached in French. But because a considerable number of Irish Catholics had made the city their home, men who were good Catholics and liberal to the Church. Bishop Du Bourg made the new rule, that every Sunday, after Vespers, a sermon should be preached in English. This appears from a letter of Rosati: "On every Sunday at

morning services we preach in French, and in the afternoon at Vespers in English."

Bishop Du Bourg wrote and spoke English well. The English of De Andreis shows that he thought in Italian. Also Father Niel, after the demise of De Andreis pro-rector of the Cathedral and President of St. Louis Academy, was able to preach the English sermon, but he seemed to have discontinued the practice. In 1823, therefore, when he made an attempt at regulating the financial affairs of the congregation, the Irish Catholics "were led to believe that there would be an English sermon every second Sunday at High Mass." But if any such promise was ever made by Father Niel, it was never realized. It was difficult for the French clergy of those days to leave the established groove. The expectations of the Irish Catholics were not complied with.

Father Edmond Saulnier who was appointed prorector of the Cathedral, was notoriously a poor speaker, hardly able to preach in French, still less in English. Naturally, the Irish Catholics became impatient of being treated as stepchildren, whilst they were the main contributors to the support of the church. It was their right to have the word of God announced to them in the language they could understand. Their petition to the Bishop to make permanent Father De Neckere's appointment to the pulpit of St. Louis Cathedral and to order him to preach an English sermon twice a month, at the time of the Highmass, made an impression, though it did not meet with immediate success. Bishop Rosati sent his answer to the Trustees of the church of St. Louis on September 1st, 1826: "As God is no respecter of persons, so those of his ministers whom he has appointed the pastors of his flock, make no distinction between the souls entrusted to their care. French and Americans, Creole and Irish, are equally dear to us, because we think them equally entitled to the spiritual assistance which is in our power to afford them. But imperious necessity often renders ineffectual our most ardent desires and reduces us to the painful impossibility of doing what we would think our happiness to do. The parish of St. Louis has hitherto had a greater share in the solicitude of her pastors than any in the diocese; and if those amongst the parishioners who speak the English language have been often deprived of instructions from the pulpit, it has not been the effect of neglect or disregard on our side. We have been more deeply affected than any other by the consideration of the sad results that are to be expected from this inconvenience. But we cannot give what is out of our power and, in such circumstances, the only remedy which we can find for our evils is to have recourse to the Lord of the harvest and beseech him to send evangelical workmen into his harvest.

In the meantime we think it our duty to exert ourselves in order to raise a national clergy, who knowing the language spoken in the country, may be able to assist all their countrymen.’<sup>1</sup>

The practice of preaching the English sermon, not at Highmass, but after Vespers, was continued. Then, as Father De Neckere’s health was declining, Bishop Rosati gave him permission to go to Europe. The people were surprised and indignant. Father Saulnier had to bear the blame for the loss of Father De Neckere. “What is to become of the Catholics of poor St. Louis?” he exclaimed in a letter to Bishop Rosati, “If you could do without Mr. Timon, he could attract crowds to the Church. You can hardly conceive how glad the Protestant ministers are since Mr. De Neckere is gone. Whilst he was here they complained that their church was deserted.”<sup>2</sup>

In November and December of the same year, the Irish Catholics of St. Louis enjoyed a pleasant surprise; Father Timon, C. M., the son of one of their citizens, preached the jubilee in English. But after that, for eighteen months, Father Saulnier had to supply the English sermons. He even went beyond the episcopal instructions, and to satisfy both parties, gave two short sermons, one in French, and the other in English, at every High Mass. On February 28, 1828, he wrote to the Bishop on this subject:

“If the inhabitants of St. Louis would have you among them and if you had a priest for the American Catholics who could preach to them in English, things would turn out better in the Church in regard to religion as well as to those continual financial troubles.”<sup>3</sup>

On June 29, 1828, Father Regis Loisel was ordained priest at the Cathedral, and immediately became Father Saulnier’s assistant. He was the first native of St. Louis to attain the priesthood. He spoke French and English very well. Father Loisel was instructed to preach the English sermon every Sunday at 9 o’clock. Father Saulnier complained to the Bishop, that nine o’clock was too early for the English sermon, and hinted that the English sermon should be preached twice a month at the Highmass, thus alternating with the French sermon. But the Bishop clung to the old practice. He would not permit Father Saulnier to preach in English during High Mass; on August 17, 1828, he instructed him: “Preach in English at Vespers or even after High Mass.”

Father Loisel, like Father Saulnier, was no orator; and the sermon of that day in the style of Bourdaloue required an orator. Besides the state of his health was precarious. Consequently, the English

---

1 Original in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

2 Saulnier Letter of September 12, 1826, in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

3 Saulnier to Rosati, February 28, 1828, in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

sermon at the Cathedral was omitted, because there was no one to preach it.

In December, 1831, Father Joseph Anthony Lutz, having returned from his Indian Missionary ventures, became Father Saulnier's successor at the Cathedral.

The new pastor knew English fairly well, although he was only five years in this country. In his missionary trips to Kansas, Illinois, and the Northwest Territory he had been thrown together with Indian agents and other English speaking men and had acquired some facility in using the English idiom.

Shortly after the arrival of Father Lutz, after a retreat made by Bishop Rosati in the Bishop's house, with Fathers Rondot, Lutz, Condamine, and Roux, a new rule was announced regarding the sermons.

English sermons were to be preached at High Mass on the first and third Sunday of every month; on all other Sundays, French. After Vespers the sermon was to be preached in English, when the morning sermon had been in French and vice versa. The Jesuits were to preach the English sermons in the morning. Catechism was to begin at 2:30 P. M., in French by Roux, in English by Lutz, as long as Lent lasted. Every evening, on week days and Sundays, there should be a sermon. At the Lenten devotions Father Lutz sometimes preached in English.

On Monday, April 2, 1832, at the Lenten devotions, for the first time, prayers were said in English at the Cathedral. So the contest for recognition of the English speaking part of the parish at High Mass, a contest which had lasted six years, was won to the satisfaction of the Irish Catholics.<sup>4</sup>

Since his appointment to the See of St. Louis in 1827 until the consecration of Bishop De Neckere as Bishop of New Orleans, June 24, 1830, Bishop Rosati held spiritual charge of the vast territory once designated as Upper and Lower Louisiana. This double burden was a severe drain on his resources, as well as on his strength.

Realizing that his own diocese needed his exclusive attention, he used all the means in his power to secure a Bishop for the See of New Orleans. The Seminary at the Barrens also was in need of a competent Rector: Father Leo Raymond De Neckere was absent on account of ill health, and might never return. Accordingly, petition after petition went to Father Baccari in Rome, that a Superior be sent: Father John Tornatore was the man whom Bishop Rosati thought an ideal selection. When he heard of Father De Neckere's appointment to the See of New

---

<sup>4</sup> The whole language question was treated by Msgr. Holweck in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. II, pp. 5-18.

Orleans, he wrote to Father General at Paris: "De Neckere's nomination is a great loss for the Seminary, please send Tornatore." From the 1st to the 18th of October he was in attendance at the Council of Baltimore: On the closing day of this great assembly he appointed De Neckere his Vicar General.

On his return voyage he heard of De Neckere's appointment as a certainty: but on meeting the newly designated Bishop, who had in the meantime returned to the Barrens from abroad, he found him stubbornly opposed to accepting the proposed honor. At last on January 7, 1810 Father De Neckere consented to be consecrated. All arrangements were now made for the consecration which was set for May 16th, at New Orleans. But when Bishop Rosati started for the South, Father De Neckere refused to go. Bishop Rosati journeyed on without De Neckere. The priests assembled for the Consecration petitioned the Holy See that De Neckere's resignation be not accepted. In the meantime Father Tornatore arrived at the Barrens. (May 26) Bishop Rosati was overjoyed at having a new Superior of the Congregation. Father Dahmen had proved a failure as Superior: Father Timon was needed elsewhere. On June 30th, the good Bishop wrote to Father Anthony Blanc: *Annuntio tibi gaudium magnum*: De Neckere is in New Orleans and ready to receive consecration.

A very interesting letter of Bishop Rosati to Father Baccari, dated June 6, 1830, recounts the moving scenes that had occurred before De Neckere would acquiesce. "At last I am rid of New Orleans. De Neckere surely has the gift of speech. The priests petitioned him to become their Bishop. Bishop Portier fell on his knees before him, I (Rosati) knelt beside him. How could De Neckere refuse any longer."<sup>5</sup>

On his return to St. Louis, Bishop Rosati appointed Father Tornature his Vicar General.

On November 21st, the Bishop wrote to his brother Nicola at Sora in answer to an invitation to come on a visit to his old home and friends: "I am rid of New Orleans, and of the Seminary, but I have only two priests with me, and one is almost always absent on Sundays. I must preach twice every Sunday, in French and in English. I am burdened with the building of a Church at the Barrens, and of the Cathedral, as the old Cathedral is threatening to fall in ruins. How can I undertake a journey to Italy."<sup>6</sup> To Cardinal Cappellari the Bishop gives the following description of the old Cathedral, and the reasons for undertaking to build a new one:

---

<sup>5</sup> Rosati to Baccari, June 6, 1830, in "Letter Book of Bishop Rosati," cf. Diary of the dates mentioned above.

<sup>6</sup> Archives of Kenrick Seminary.

"The building of it was commenced with great courage; all the citizens contributed willingly according to their ability to erect only the walls; the roof and the floor cost about 24,000 dollars. It was never finished and the interior remained rustic, and looked like a barn. The work was badly done, so that a side wall 130 feet long is about to collapse. . . this Church could not serve much longer because it is dangerous to leave it in its present state and because it cannot be repaired for a sum smaller than it will take to erect a new Church. In the meanwhile we celebrate the holy mysteries in this barn, which is about to fall, is open to rain, snow and wind. In winter, and the winters in these parts are rigorous, we cannot pass an hour at the altar without freezing (*Senga Gelarsi*) and often the sacred ceremonies are disturbed by the rain which the storm carries to the very steps of the altar. I have applied everywhere, I sacrificed what I could, but if the Lord does not open to us some way, we have to do without a Church. Without revenues, without income from our own country, a poor missionary bishop can only recommend his needs to Divine Providence, explain them to those who can help him and hope that the Lord will speak to their hearts in his favor."

When at last, after a long period of anxious waiting Bishop Rosati was relieved of the administration of New Orleans, he turned his full energy to the upbuilding of his episcopal city, St. Louis. The old brick Church was an ugly structure, and in its half-finished condition inadequate to its purpose and the dignity of the diocese: To replace it by a magnificent temple of God seemed a sacred duty. The finest Church in the entire west his Cathedral was intended to be, the grand outward symbol of central authority and general leadership in the Church. A meeting of the parishioners was called for the fourth day of April, 1830. The Bishop presided and Marie Philip Leduc acted as secretary.<sup>8</sup> It was resolved to build a new Cathedral, worthy of the city and diocese. In order to raise funds for the undertaking it was decided to lease the north half of the Church-block, where, the record says, "is the ancient cemetery, and the old Church stands." William Higgins, M. P. Leduc, John O'Rourke, Michael O'Rourke, Louis Menard, and James Lynch were selected as a standing Com-

---

<sup>7</sup> Rosati to Prefect of Propaganda, December 30, 1821. Original draft of letter in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>8</sup> The facts stated in the following account of the building of the Cathedral are derived from an address delivered before the Missouri Historical Society, September 16, 1875, entitled "Retrospective View of the First Religious Establishments in the City of St. Louis," published by Msgr. Tannrath, Chancellor, in the "Church Progress," December 14, 21 and 28, 1916. The author, Wilson Primm, was secretary of the Cathedral Building Committee.

mittee, with full power to adopt all measures necessary and conducive to accomplish the proposed end. Wilson Primm was appointed Permanent Secretary. Subsequently, William Higgins having died, and Lewis Menard, Patrick Walsh and John O'Rourke, resigned, Col. Rene Paul, Hugh O'Neill, and General Bernard Pratte were appointed to fill the vacancies.

The committee set on foot private subscriptions, for the building of the church and the removal of the dead from the graveyard; a loan of eight thousand dollars, generously proffered by Bishop Du Bourg, was gratefully accepted; and the north half of block No. 59 was leased to George Morton and Joseph C. Lavelle. This lease was executed on the 25th of August 1830, in "presence of St. Garnier and Wilson Primm of the committee, and the said Lavelle and Morton."

On the 15th, upon the report of this special committee, it was determined "that the walls should be three feet thick from the foundations to the floor, and two and a half above the floor; the foundation should be sunk four feet in the ground and raised five above the ground; that the church should be eighty by one hundred and thirty, and thirty-four feet high from the floor; that the front should be of neat hammered stone, and the sides of good range work."

On the 20th, the proposal of John Darst for the carpenter work, and of John Goodfellow for excavating the foundation, were accepted.

On the 20th of December "the proposals of Hugh O'Neil for building the stone walls were read and accepted, provided he binds himself to finish the whole of the stone work, except what is to be made according to contract by the stone cutters and the columns inside, for \$6000," and that the further sum of \$500 be granted for grouting the whole work.

The proposals of John Withnell and Charles Coutts for the stone cutting work and furnishing all the materials therefor for \$5300, were read and accepted, provided they make themselves responsible for the accidents that might happen in putting up the stones, and make the steps of the portico returned to end."

On August 1st, 1831, the work was so far advanced that the cornerstone of the new edifice could be laid with the prescribed solemnities:

"At five o'clock in the afternoon," as Bishop Rosati writes, "the people having been called together by the ringing of the bells, and having vested ourselves in the sacristy, in company of the Rev. Fathers Edmond Saulnier, assistant priest; John Elet, deacon, and Michael Condamine, subdeacon; Rev. L. Doutreluingne, Cruciferarius, together with the Revs. L. Rondot, P. Verhaegen, S. J., and A. Mascaroni, master of ceremonies, we proceeded to the Church, where Rev. Rondot

delivered a sermon in French. Having chanted the 'Veni Creator' we proceeded to the foundation of the New Cathedral. Then having observed all that the rubrics prescribed, we blessed and placed the cornerstone in the front angle of that part of the Church which looks to the East. The stone contained a metal case in which was placed a glass vase well sealed; this vase contains several coins of the previous year, a parchment on which is written the early history of the foundation of the City of St. Louis, and a parchment with the following inscription: "In the year of our Lord, 1831, on the 1st day of August, the 55th year of our American Independence, during the pontificate of Pope Gregory XVI, Andrew Jackson being President of the United States, and John Miller Governor of Missouri, the cornerstone of this Cathedral Church, in honor of St. Louis of France, to be erected by the Catholic citizens of St. Louis, was blessed and placed by the Right Rev. Joseph Rosati, Bishop of St. Louis, assisted by the Rev. Fathers E. Saulnier, P. J. Verhaegen, S. J., L. Rondot, P. W. Walsh, M. Condamine, J. A. Elet, A. Mascaroni and L. Doutreluingne. There were present Messrs. Bernard Pratte, P. M. Ledue, Hugh O'Neill, R. Paul, James Lynch and M. O'Rourke, the Cathedral trustees, and a large concourse of people. Having finished this ceremony we returned to the Church, where Rev. P. J. Verhaegen, S. J., preached a sermon in the English language. A collection was then taken up for the benefit of the new Church, and the sum collected amounted to \$62.50."<sup>9</sup>

On January 2nd, 1832, the good Bishop is happy to record a large contribution. "I received a letter from the Propaganda at Rome, which contained an order from Pope Gregory XVI for \$3,000 in gold, to be devoted to the building of the new Cathedral. Needless to add that this communication brought me great consolation and joy."<sup>10</sup>

The Bishop had now taken up his residence at the Cathedral with Very Rev. Louis Rondot as Vicar General, and the Fathers Saulnier, J. A. Lutz, Benedict Roux, as Cathedral clergy.

There were chapels at the Jesuit College, the Convent of the Sacred Heart, and the Hospital of the Sisters of Charity. The priests at the Jesuit College in 1831 were Fathers P. J. Verhaegen, Rector, Charles Van Quickenborne, Peter Walsh, P. J. De Smet, J. Van Lommel, James Van de Velde, and J. A. Elet, all members of the Society of Jesus. The city was now well provided in this regard: But there was ample work for all, and above all, for the Bishop. On July 27th, 1831 he had blessed and laid the cornerstone for the new Church at Ste. Genevieve, where his old and trusted friend, Father Dahmen, was

---

<sup>9</sup> Rosati's Diary.

<sup>10</sup> Rosati's Diary.

pastor: On October 9th, of the same year he consecrated the new brick church at Old Mines built by Father Philip Borgna, C. M.

On April 23rd, 1830, the Bishop paid \$4000, out of the annual allowance derived from the Society of the Propagation of the Faith to Pratte and the Chouteaus on his note of \$4500 . . . Relieved of the burden of the Cathedral debt, the Bishop took steps to insure a quick expansion of the Church into the numerous new settlements of Europeans, that had suddenly sprung up like the corn in the fields after the first warm spring rain. From all corners of his vast diocese came the call for priests. We shall see how nobly Bishop Rosati responded.

## BISHOP ROSATI'S CATHEDRAL

In the meantime building operations had proceeded slowly but steadily, until in September 1834 the massive structure stood there in solemn grandeur, the finest House of God this side the Allegheny Mountains.

A final meeting of the committee was held on the 3rd of October 1834, at which were present the Rt. Rev. Bishop Rosati, Mary P. Ledue, Hugh O'Neil, Sr., and Rene Paul. The arrangements for the consecration of the Cathedral were now made. Bishop Rosati records in his Diary under date of November 12th: "I have written a full report, in Italian, of the consecration of our new Cathedral Church to His Holiness, Pope Gregory XVI, as also to Cardinal Pedicini, and have sent a copy to the Leopoldine Society.<sup>1</sup> As a memorial of Bishop Rosati's most memorable triumph, the first part at least, of the document containing a full description of the building deserves a place in the History of St. Louis:<sup>2</sup>

"This august temple, raised in the City of St. Louis, Mo., was begun about three years ago. The first stone thereof was blessed and set in place with the customary ceremonies on August 1st, 1831, by the present Bishop of the Diocese. Thanks to the munificence of the reigning Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory XVI, through the generous aid given by the Association for the Propagation of the Faith established in France, and of the Leopoldine Institution established in the dominions of His Majesty the Emperor of Austria; by means of the repeated efforts of the inhabitants of St. Louis who have contributed according to their capacity, either by subscriptions, or by collections taken a number of times for this purpose; finally owing to other resources drawn from a piece of property adjacent to the old church, and loans of various sums of money obtained at reasonable rates, this edifice has been con-

---

<sup>1</sup> Rosati's Diary. Card. Pedicini was Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda from 1831-1834 in succession to Card. Maurus Cappellari.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Rosati's letter to the Leopoldine Society was, no doubt, identical with that sent to the Pope and to the Cardinal, but it was published in Heft IX, in abbreviated form. The complete letter was first published in English by Rev. Dr. Souvay in his excellent booklet, "The Cathedrals of St. Louis." For the sake of brevity and greater clearness, we have omitted a few irrelevant remarks, indirect requests for help, and minor details. Nothing of historical importance was sacrificed. The account of the Consecration we have used, but not quoted. The sums expended on the building before it was completed reached the grand total of \$85,000.



### BISHOP ROSATI'S CATHEDRAL

Church of St. Louis of France

On the site of this Church first Mass in St. Louis was celebrated March 14, 1764.  
The Building was commenced in 1831, and Consecrated October 26, 1834.



tinued without other interruptions than those which were caused by the rigor of the winter, which in this country does not permit building operations; and has at length been put in condition of being consecrated.

“The dimensions of the church are as follows: length, 136 feet; width, 84 feet; and height, 40 feet. The entire facade, as also 27 feet of the sides near the facade, are of beautiful polished stone, much like marble. The portico is sustained in front by four columns of the same material, 27 feet high, and of a diameter of four feet. It is 40 feet long and 12 feet deep, Doric, after the fashion of the ruins of Paestum. On the frieze of that portico and of the whole facade is read in relief the following inscription: *In honorem S. Ludovici*. DEO UNI ET TRINO DICATUM. A. MDCCCXXXIV. Above the three doors are placed three slabs of Italian marble, upon which is engraved the following text of the Apocalypse: *Ecce Tabernaculum Dei cum hominibus, et habitabit cum eis*; this inscription is in Latin over the middle door, in English over the door to the east and in French over the other. The Gospel text: *Domus mea Domus orationis vocabitur*, is inscribed on two other slabs in French and in English on either side of the facade. Over the parapet surmounting the outer cornice of the facade are placed six candelabra of stone. The portico is crowned by a beautiful pediment in the center of which is engraved in large gilded Hebrew characters the ineffable Name of God surmounted by rays. Back of that pediment arises the belfry, about 20 feet square and 40 feet high above the apex of the facade which itself is 50 feet high; it is all constructed of polished stone, ornamented with two rows of pilasters and cornices. In the center of the lower row of pilasters there is on the four sides a clock's dial face; and in the center of the upper row are the openings of the bell-house. Time has not permitted to finish the octagonal spire, 45 feet high, before the consecration of the church; the approach of winter having compelled the workmen to suspend work until next spring. The skeleton of this spire is of wood; it will be covered outside with sheets of tin, and surmounted by a ball of gilded brass, on the top of which will be raised a cross ten feet high covered likewise with gilded brass. The entire roof of the church is covered with sheets of brass. The portico rests upon a platform of stone, which is raised five feet above the level of the street, and reached by steps all around the three sides. The front of the church is separated from the street by a narrow space, surrounded by an iron fence resting on a low stone wall and interrupted in five places by gates, two of which lead to a beautiful passage-way paved with brick, which runs all around the church and is intended for processions; the other three lead from the street to the church steps.

“Inside the church is:

In the first place, the Sanctuary, four feet higher than the floor of the rest of the church. It is 40 feet long and 30 wide, and is separated by Corinthian balusters, which form the communion rail, reached by several steps running all the length of the sanctuary. The back of the sanctuary is decorated with four fluted columns, with their gilt capitals, an architrave, a frieze and a cornice, all of Corinthian style; in the pediment above is an oval window before which was placed a transparent picture representing the Holy Ghost under the form of a dove, emitting on all sides rays of light, some of which lose themselves in clouds in the midst of which may be seen many angels; on either side of the pediment is the gilded figure of an angel carrying the two tables of the Old and the New Law respectively. The organ loft is placed on one side of the sanctuary; and on the opposite side is a gallery destined for the children of the orphanage. Underneath these two galleries are the doors giving access to the two side sacristies. The picture of the main altar represents our Lord crucified, with the Blessed Virgin, St. John and the holy women at foot of the cross. This picture impresses greatly the Protestants who see it. The altar is of stone, and it is covered with *antependia*.

“The two side chapels with their altars next arrest our attention. These two chapels are on the same level as the sanctuary and the sacristies. They are decorated with two Ionic columns with gilded capitals, which support an architrave, frieze, cornice and pediment of the same style. The one is dedicated to St. Vincent de Paul, secondary Patron of the Diocese, and the other to St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland.

“Underneath the sanctuary, the side chapels and the sacristies is a large underground chapel, measuring 84 feet in length and 30 ft. in width. It may be reached from the two side aisles of the church by two flights of stone steps; and likewise from the two sacristies and from the outside. This chapel is consecrated to the Blessed Sacrament; it is also destined for the administration of the Sacrament of Penance, and for this purpose four handsome confessionals have been placed in it. There also are the stations of the Way of the Cross. Hence it will be a place where the faithful shall be able to cultivate and exercise their devotion without distractions. Although this chapel is five feet under ground, yet it is well lighted by means of six windows.

“To return to the church above, its main body is made up of three aisles divided by two rows of five columns; these are of brick covered with stucco and tinted so as to imitate marble; they measure 27 feet in height and 3½ in diameter; the capitals, which are of stone

painted in brass finish, the architrave, the friez and the large cornice running along both sides of the nave, are Doric. The vault of the nave soars forty feet above the floor; it is in the shape of a surbased arch, and divided in eighteen rectangular panels corresponding to the spaces between the columns, each decorated with cornice, rose and other ornaments of stucco. The ceilings of the two side aisles are likewise stuccoed and painted so as to figure panels. The church is lighted by fourteen large windows, sixteen by eight feet, semicircular in the upper part; there are also a number of other smaller windows, semi-circular, oval or rectangular. Alongside the wall in front are several spacious galleries for the use of the people; these galleries are so arranged that the men will be separated from the women, the boys from the girls. Attention was also given to the accommodation of the poor negroes: for their special use are two beautiful galleries, where the persons of both sexes belonging to this class may assist separately at divine offices. Finally, a handsome recess closed by an iron gate contains the Baptismal Font at a short distance from the church door. The pulpit, located by one of the columns in the middle of the church, is of varnished wood, and of a quite elegant shape. Two hundred pews, disposed regularly in the body of the church, and a number of others in the various galleries, offer to the Catholics of the city, and to the Protestants who come with pleasure and in goodly numbers, the necessary accommodations to hear comfortably the word of God and the expounding of the dogmas of the Catholic religion. As winter here is quite rigorous, there were constructed in the basement two furnaces on the model of the heating apparatus invented recently and used successfully in various cities of this country; thus the furnaces are out of sight, and the hot air is let into the church by means of two circular openings, two feet in diameter, covered with a metal grate; the cost of heating is very little, owing to the abundance of coal in this country; and thus are removed the pretexts and excuses of those who invoked the severity of the cold to dispense themselves from coming to church.

“The new Cathedral is alongside the residence of the Bishop, from which it is separated only by an alley eighteen feet wide. The secular priests residing in St. Louis and exercising the parochial ministry with the Bishop, live with him a kind of community life, with its rules, its regular exercises of piety, spiritual conferences, reading of Holy Scripture at table, etc. Their life is one of retirement from all useless relations with seculars, from whom they never accept any invitations either to dinner or to supper outside the house, so that they may always be ready for any calls. Their number is still inadequate to the needs, which in this city are harder to satisfy than elsewhere, because the population speaks three languages, French, English and

German. A large number of German Catholics have come, and are continuing to come, to settle in the Diocese and the city of St. Louis. As a rule, they are very pious, industrious, and they do honor to the religion which they profess by word and deed. It is therefore necessary to preach in these three languages; yet all the clergy employed in the service of the parish at present consists only of the Bishop, two priests and a cleric. From time to time a Jesuit comes from the College to preach in English; and on solemn feast days, these Fathers come to assist at pontifical functions, so that, with the further aid of altar boys vested in red cassocks and surplices, who fulfill the minor offices, the solemnities may be celebrated with proper dignity.

“On the west side of the Cathedral there is a beautiful piece of ground belonging to the church, which might otherwise have been turned into a source of revenue; however, in order to obviate the inconvenience resulting from having living houses so near the church, the Bishop has reserved this piece of property for the Orphan Asylum. The charity of the faithful is much interested in these children, of whom, after the outbreak of the cholera, twenty-five were gathered together and are raised in a small house; a fair held by the most respectable ladies of the city in favor of the Orphanage has returned \$1,000, besides \$800 for the building of a new asylum. Providence will certainly do the rest. Building operations for this new Orphanage will commence next spring.

“The Church is now completed; but far from being paid, and there is a dearth of vestments and other articles of ornament and use.

“The twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost. October 26th, was set apart for the solemn consecration of the Cathedral. Nothing was left undone, that could add to the splendor of these festivities. Bishop Flaget of Bardstown and Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati were invited by the Bishop of St. Louis to grace the occasion with their presence and to perform the consecration of the newly-appointed Bishop of Vincennes, Simon Bruté, in the newly consecrated Church. The Bishops consented. All the missionary priests of the diocese, the Jesuits with their clerics and novices, the faculty of the Seminary and University of the Blessed Virgin at the Barrens, made their appearance on the appointed day. The inhabitants of the city were full of joy, the ladies brought all kinds of ornaments to decorate the altars. The citizens vied with each other in giving assistance in their military uniforms, in keeping order and marching to the tune of trumpet and drum.

“On the eve of the celebration the three bells of the Cathedral rang out the glad tidings of the coming festivities; the roar of the cannon invited all to the consecration. In the old Cathedral the sacred

relics were exposed on the altar, richly decorated and covered with a crown. Matins were sung by the assembled Bishops and clergy.

“On the morning of the 27th of October, the Bishop of St. Louis, and the other Bishops and priests, assembled in the old Cathedral, and put on their vestments. The procession moved, under an escort of honor and cheered by martial strains, to the new church. The number of onlookers increased from minute to minute. The sacred functions were carried out in accordance with the Roman Ritual. Two missionary priests explained the sacred ceremonies to the people, in French and in English. The procession with the sacred relics from the old to the new Cathedral exceeded in splendor anything that St. Louis had ever seen of religious ceremonies. Good order was not disturbed for a moment. A stranger might have imagined, that all inhabitants of St. Louis were Catholics, so attentive, so quiet, so devout were even the non-catholics at the celebration.

“After the ceremony of consecration was completed all the clergy vested themselves in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament to assist at the first Holy Mass in the newly-consecrated Church. The Bishop of St. Louis pontificated, the other Bishops assisted. The Bishop of Cincinnati moved the entire audience to enthusiasm by his eloquent sermon. Three o'clock in the afternoon saw the conclusion of the holy, never-to-be-forgotten, celebration, of which all St. Louis, Catholic and Protestant, old and young, men and women, as well as the surrounding country, spoke and will speak for years to come, and whose holy results the Church will soon experience in the return of numerous non-Catholics to the bosom of Mother Church.

“Vespers were held at 6 p. m. by the Senior Bishop of America, Flaget, assisted by a large number of the clergy. An American priest, Mr. Abell, delivered the sermon in English. During the entire month of October Solemn High Mass and Vespers were held with sermons in the English and French languages, the visiting prelates taking turns.

“On the 28th of October, the feast of the Apostles Simon and Jude, the solemn consecration of the newly appointed Bishop of Vincennes, Simon Brute, was performed by the Bishop of Bardstown, Flaget, assisted by the Bishops of St. Louis and Cincinnati. The latter preached an eloquent sermon on the divine institution of the Episopacy, painting in the most glowing colors the rapid spread of the Catholic religion in America.

“On the Feast of All Saints the Bishop of Cincinnati participated, and at the close of the entire festivities of the consecration, the newly consecrated Bishop of Vincennes held Pontifical High Mass and Vespers, with the Te Deum before the Blessed Sacrament. After Benediction the

Blessed Sacrament was carried in procession to the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament and reposed on the altar.

On the 3rd of November the visiting prelates departed to install the newly consecrated Bishop of Vincennes in his See.

"There it stands, the temple of God in glory. Would that all its children were living stones in the grand Temple of God, the Catholic Church."<sup>3</sup>

A new era had now begun, an era of progress, and expansion, no more to be arrested by adverse powers. The old order had changed, and its symbol, the Brick Cathedral of Bishop Du Bourg, too, was destined to disappear. Bishop Rosati writes in his Diary, in 1835, on the 7th day of April, of a very serious fire, which destroyed a livery stable situated in the neighborhood of the Cathedral. The fire occurred at midnight. There was great consternation and fear among all the people that the new Cathedral would be destroyed, but he adds that the strenuous efforts of the citizens saved the Church building, and he offers thanks to the Almighty for His great favor. The *Catholic Herald* of January 8th, 1835 copied the following item ament the consecration of the St. Louis Cathedral from the "Catholic Telegraph" of Cincinnati, which had a poem on the subject:

"At the dedication of the Cathedral at St. Louis, when the solemn moment of the Consecration approached, and the Son of the Living God was going to descend for the first time upon the new residence of His glory on earth, the drums beat the reveille, three of the Star Spangled Banners were lowered over the Balustrade of the Sanctuary—The artillery gave a deafening discharge—the bells were again rung, and tears flowed from every eye . . . ."

Miserable alarmists endeavored to seize on this circumstance and affected to see the subversion of the temporal liberty of the country."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Rosati's Cathedral is still one of the monumental buildings of the city. The "St. Louis Republican" of August 15, 1875, said of it: "It is fit that all who cherish memories of the past, who have regard for the preservation of this, the most important historical monument left to us, should join in the work of maintaining and keeping in order the Cathedral of St. Louis. It is not alone a work for the Catholics to do, but in a large sense it is a special work for the Protestants as well. It belongs to all; it is historical."

<sup>4</sup> It was on the 7th day of April, 1835, that the Rev. Samuel Parker arrived in St. Louis to meet Dr. Marcus Whitman, his associate, on their way to Oregon and incidentally to witness two memorable events in the history of the Catholic Church: namely, the completion of the new Cathedral of Bishop Rosati and the passing of the old brick church of Bishop Du Bourg. Of the former, he says in his journal: "The Catholic Cathedral is built of a firm light brown sandstone, and is a large expensive building." Concerning the latter, he remarks: "A fire last night destroyed a very large livery stable, in which we lost a horse, saddle and bridle. The Old Cathedral, which was used for a store house, was also burnt, together with a very large quantity of crockery, which it contained." Du Bourg's brick Cathedral had served the people of St. Louis until the consecration of the new one, for the noblest purposes of religion, and now, six months after its disuse, it was saved from all vulgar use by an act of Divine Providence, the great fire of 1835.

## THE MISSOURI RIVER PARISHES

By virtue of the Concordat of 1823, the Jesuits of Florissant had spiritual sway over the entire Northwest part of the diocese between the Missouri and the Mississippi Rivers. Consequently the ancient but sadly reduced parishes of St. Charles, St. Ferdinand, Dardenne, and Portage des Sioux became dependent upon their ministrations. Every one of these parishes had landed property, and a rude structure of logs they called their church. These, as well as the trustee-system were an inheritance from the Spanish regime. Father Van Quickenborne assumed charge of the spiritual affairs, succeeding the Lazarist Father Aquaroni. Bishop Du Bourg had ordained, in the case of St. Ferdinand, that the authority of the trustees was to cease as soon as the new church, begun by Father De La Croix, should be blessed. The work of constructing this brick building consumed eleven years, so that the consecration services had to be deferred until September 2nd, 1832. The church was dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; the secondary patron saints being St. Ferdinand and St. Francis Regis.

The Creole population of St. Ferdinand was, as a matter of course, Catholic, but, owing to long neglect, rather poorly instructed or sadly oblivious of duty. "At the same time," as Father Van Asseche wrote, "there were many conversions and a better state of things could be hoped for."<sup>1</sup>

"The revivals preached by the Fathers," wrote Mother Duchesne, "bring into the church, and then to the sacraments, almost all the village. One hundred and sixty men have made their Easter Communion. On the Feast of Corpus Christi the procession, followed by all the parishioners, went along the streets and through the fields. The Blessed Sacrament rested on an altar erected in our outfield. These Fathers would convert a kingdom."<sup>2</sup>

What attracted these naturally devout people most was the annual Corpus Christi procession, held in the open, accompanied by soldiers, who would discharge their muskets in salute to their Divine King, at Benediction. The earliest Jesuit pastor in residence at St. Ferdinand of Florissant was Father Jodocus Van Asseche. At first he attended his parish from the Novitiate: but in 1832 he took up his residence near the church. For a time the presence of a pastor in their midst had no palpable effect on the people of the sleepy village. The

---

1 Van Asseche to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

2 Baunard-Fullerton, "Life of M. Du Chesne," p. 261.

spiritual harvest remained as small as ever: even the pomp and splendor of Confirmation, administered by Bishop Rosati, had, as the *Analist* regretfully remarks, "very few spectators" in Florissant. Father De Theux, the Superior at the Novitiate, in September 1835, opened a school for boys, which was taught by the Jesuit Brother De Meyer, whilst the Ladies of the Sacred Heart continued their day-school and boarding school for girls. As "The Annual Letters" of 1837 put the matter: "The reformation of the parish must begin with the children." That was Father De Theux's last hope, short of a miracle. We can, therefore, sympathize with his strong protest to Bishop Rosati against the contemplated withdrawal of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart from their educational field in St. Ferdinand.

During the period, May 1835, to August 1836, Father Van Assche was pastor of St. Charles, his place at Florissant being taken by Father James Busschotts; then he returned to Florissant to remain until April 1838, when he was made Rector and Master of Novices. He was succeeded by Father Paillasson<sup>3</sup> and, after four months, by Father James Gleizal. Through the prayers and exertions and, above all, through the priestly conduct of these Fathers, a marked transformation was effected in the religious life of the Congregation. Where, in former years, scarcely two hundred members made their Easter duty, in the year 1839 the number of Easter Communicants reached eight hundred. Of all the parishes on the Missouri River, St. Charles was at this time the most considerable. It had enjoyed the ministry of resident priests for a number of years before the coming of the Jesuits. But in the general collapse of ecclesiastical affairs after the withdrawal of the secular arm that had supported the spiritual, sad days of almost utter destitution fell upon the people. Father Benedict Richards, soon after his appointment to the pastorate, was called away to New Orleans. The first Jesuit to exercise the sacred ministry in St. Charles, was Father Timmermans, and his last visit to St. Charles was the occasion of his death. Father Van Quickenborne, in his isolation, could do no more than visit the place on week days, or send the scholastics Verhaegen and Elet to hold religious services for the people. Immediately after his ordination at the Barrens, Father Peter Verhaegen was assigned as visiting missionary to the parishes of St. Charles and Portage des Sioux with three other stations.

Religious and moral conditions among the Creoles of St. Charles were most deplorable. "Bacchanalian orgies of pagan days" seemed to have returned to the Christian settlement; men and girls spending their time in public dancing and drinking whisky."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Father Paillasson, after his unfortunate attempt to build up the School in new Madrid, was sent to various places in Missouri and Illinois; in 1836 he entered the Novitiate at Florissant.

<sup>4</sup> Baunard-Fullerton, "Mother Du Chesne," p. 182.

The conditions obtaining in 1819 were slowly changing for the better; but all too slowly for the Father's fiery zeal. "I do not hear regularly more than twenty confessions a month, "Father Verhaegen wrote in 1827, at a time when the Catholic population of St. Charles was about five hundred, "and I do not see how, without a change in circumstances, this number will increase. The French spend the spring, summer and fall on the river, finding thus their only means of support. During their absence, their wives almost perish of hunger and are often without decent dress, whilst the children are in a miserable state. When the voyageurs return, a mass of debts contracted during their absence has to be paid. I am convinced it will require a miracle for our missionaries to gather in anything like a spiritual harvest. For if, according to the old saw, occasion makes the thief, here navigation makes the devil."<sup>5</sup>

The old log church of Blanchette's time (1792) was in danger of falling to pieces. Father Van Assche called it "a barn, not of stone but of wood, without foundation of any kind except a few stones placed under the joists to keep them from rotting. The windows are now without glass. If I receive money from Europe, as I expect, I shall buy in the town of St. Charles a piece of property nine acres in extent, together with the house in which the Ladies of the Sacred Heart formerly resided. In that case I will build a church there and lease the land on which the old church now stands, if your Lordship approves the plans, and the parishioners consent."<sup>6</sup> According to Bishop Du Bourg's policy, the trustee-system was abolished by the parish, and the pastor was named sole administrator of all the church-property of St. Charles Parish.

Not long after his ordination in 1826, Father Verhaegen came to superintend the construction of the new Church which was to be the finest sacred edifice in the entire diocese. It was to cost upwards of five thousand dollars. Whence the funds were to come remained the secret of Father Van Quickenborne. All the contributions in money and labor did not amount to one thousand dollars. Yet the work progressed, and the bills were duly paid, and in 1828 the church was ready for divine worship. It is believed that Father Van Quickenborne had devoted a considerable part of his patrimony to this great undertaking, and had obtained generous sums from some of his Belgian friends. Father Verhaegen felt greatly relieved at the completion of the beautiful building, with its "facade of cut stone, surrounded by a pretty cornice, which rested upon four pilasters." "It was eighty feet long,"

---

<sup>5</sup> Verhaegen to Dziorizynski, November 7, 1827.

<sup>6</sup> Van Assche to De Nef, January 9, 1825.

he proudly tells us, "forty feet wide and twenty-nine feet high, and the only church in the diocese which was plastered."<sup>7</sup>

The consecration of the new edifice by Bishop Rosati, was an affair of unprecedented splendor. Nine priests were in attendance; the laity of St. Charles and neighboring places took a real interest in the proceedings. The Ladies of the Sacred Heart were deeply impressed: "The new Church," Madam Duchesne wrote to Bishop Du Bourg in France, "looks out upon the Missouri, and is built upon the site of Your former garden, and just over the spot, from which You helped with Your episcopal hands to pull up a young sapling."<sup>8</sup> Father Verhaegen to whom a great part of the credit was due, now retired to Florissant, and on August 15, 1828, Father John Baptist Smedts was commissioned as the first Superior of the St. Charles Residence. Father Felix Verreydt came as his assistant, but was principally employed in the out-missions. The logs of the old church were conveyed to the lot where the dwelling stood, and were built up into two apartments, one of which was to serve as a school room for the boys of the parish.

In 1828, the tireless energy of Father Van Quickenborne succeeded in reestablishing the Ladies of the Sacred Heart in the now thriving town of St. Charles. Just prior to his departure for the Osage Excursion, he sent a deed of donation of their former house in St. Charles, which he asked them to occupy. The sainted Mother Barat gratefully acquiesced, and in June 1828, Mother Duchesne took possession of the new residence. But a new building of brick for the Sisters was undertaken by Father Van Quickenborne in 1833. Madame Lucille Mathevon was then in charge of the Convent and school. The school for boys had opened its doors under the Jesuit Brother Henry Rysselman, with thirty-five pupils. If the school for girls should not languish, a new building was requisite. But whence can the means be obtained? "Sure of \$300." says Father Verhagen, "he, (that is Father Van Quickenborne) will get the rest, though he should wear out six pairs of shoes by running through St. Louis on begging excursions."<sup>9</sup> And he did get the requisite sum, he whose very name designated a living fountain. Owing to an attack of sickness, Brother Henry was not able to teach for about three months, during which time Father Verreydt took his place in school.

This school at St. Charles was established in 1828; it was followed in 1835 by the school at Florissant under Brother De Meyer, and

---

<sup>7</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi." That a church was plastered was considered a real distinction, as most of the log structures "gaped unplastered and unceiled."

<sup>8</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," apud Erskine, p. 296.

<sup>9</sup> Verhaegen to McSherry, October 16, 293, Archives of Baltimore.

others. After the pioneer efforts of the Christian Brothers at Ste. Genevieve, the St. Charles School for boys is the earliest parochial school, west of the Mississippi River.

Father Van Quickenborne certainly deserves the gratitude of all lovers of Catholic education, for his foresight and energy in laying the foundation for the wonderful system of parochial schools, we now behold in the shadow of almost every Catholic Church in the country. The valiant and wise pioneer did not always meet the encouragement he deserved in the matter of such schools. Yet he urged their necessity:

"All of our Fathers are of opinion," he wrote to Father Dzorizynski in 1829; "that schools like Brother Henry's are of the greatest importance, and without them the young in this poor region cannot be raised Catholics. I saw somewhere in the history of the Society that one of our Generals declared this to be in accordance with the spirit of the Institute."<sup>10</sup> Religious conditions were improving in St. Charles in 1829: "A great part of the good done there," Father Van Quickenborne reported to Bishop Rosati, "must, under God, be attributed to the schools."<sup>11</sup>

On the west bank of the crystal-clear Mississippi River a few miles above its junction with the turbid Missouri, lies the dreamy village of Portage des Sioux. It has seen more lively days: one of the greatest Indian gatherings met here to deed away their landed possessions for a pittance. But like the other Creole settlements the place never attained its full stature. American, German and Irish settlers have now supplanted, to a great extent, the early French population. In the days of Van Quickenborne it was still exclusively French. It had a church, of the traditional log construction, but it had no resident priest until the advent of the Italian Lazarist Acquaroni in 1818. Father Timmermans was wont to say Mass at Portage every second Sunday. Father Smedts attended the place from the Seminary and later on from St. Charles. In 1835 it received its first resident pastor in the person Father Felix Verreydt. It was as late as 1827 that the parish, at last, gave possession of the Church presbytery and cemetery to the Jesuits: thus eliminating the dangers of the old trustee-system.

In sharp contrast with the other Creole parishes of St. Charles County, the parish of Portage des Sioux always enjoyed the reputation of excelling in religious fervor. "Here if anywhere in Missouri," witness the Annual Letters for 1837, "the life of the first Christians is reproduced. None can be called rich and there are few who do not have to toil for a living. Perhaps it is this circumstance which prevents vice from entering in and preserves the innocence of the

---

10 Van Quickenborne to Dzorizynski, November 13, 1829, Archives of Baltimore.

11 Van Quickenborne to Rosati, Archives St. Louis Archdiocese.

inhabitants. A Father attended by a lay-brother is stationed here. He is poor among the poor but he is fortunate, for all that, seeing that those committed to his charge are rich in virtue."<sup>12</sup>

But in spite of their poverty the people of Portage were anxious to build a new Church. Father Verreydt met their wishes cheerfully, and on May 1st, 1836, the cornerstone of the new temple of God was laid by Bishop Rosati. In 1839, Church and parsonage, both of brick, were completed; the Church was solemnly blessed under the title of St. Francis Assisi.

The village of Dardenne, with its Church of St. Peter, was one of the missions of the "Good Father Prior," who built the log-chapel the Jesuits found there on their arrival in 1824. The names of Fathers Timmermans and Verreydt occur most frequently in connection with the early history of the parish. It was under Father Verreydt's administration in 1832, that the young Jesuit Missionary Father John Van Lommel gave his three-days mission at Dardenne, then the most forlorn and spiritually destitute corner of the diocese. The exercises had been announced to begin on Saturday evening, August 14th. A dreary spot with a few miserable cabins in sight, and a church that might easily be mistaken for a barn. He entered the church and began to ring the bell, but no sign of life far and wide. Yet, as the good Father himself tells us: "After ringing the bell at intervals I gathered about fifteen hearers, partly French and partly American. I said to myself, this will never do. But remembering St. Jame's experience in Spain, I took courage and began to preach in English, and as well as I could in French, a thing I never attempted before. I announced the regulations of the triduum, firmly resolved to speak three times a day in French and English, even though there should be but a single hearer. But God, who does not place too great a strain upon the weak, came to my assistance at once. The next day there were about seventy, among them many Protestants. This was not so remarkable, but it was remarkable that, on Monday and Tuesday, the same gathering of about seventy should be present at the three exercises. There were thirty-eight communions (never so many before in Dardenne), fifty confessions and three baptisms of converts. I need not say that I returned from the excursion in high spirits."<sup>13</sup>

A great change was in store for Dardenne: Father De Theux writes in 1835: "Father Verreydt has succeeded in finishing his church of St. Peter, at least to the extent of being able to say Mass in it on the 29th of last March 1835. A great number of persons assisted at the services. The children, very modest and well-pre-

---

<sup>12</sup> *Litterae Annuae*, 1837.

<sup>13</sup> Van Lommel to Dzierizynski, September 20, 1832.

pared, made their first communion . . . It is possible that with time the needs of the people and the growing number of Catholics will require that a resident priest be stationed there. The church is of wood, but well constructed and, when plastered, will be a very handsome one for Missouri. It is strongly built too, and has already cost more than \$700. I suppose \$300 more will finish it."<sup>14</sup>

The population in the Country around Dardenne was increasing by leaps and bounds. The constant stream of immigration, chiefly of German farmers and artisans filled every nook and corner of St. Charles County. As early as November 1831, when Fathers Kenny, McSherry and Van De Velde sojourned at the newly established Jesuit College in St. Louis, Father Van De Velde wrote: "Another object of curiosity to us "Three Wise Men from the East," is the almost continuous influx of strangers from other states; the public road which leads to the interior of this State passes before our College and along it you may see every day, men, women and children, on foot or in wagons and other vehicles, cows, horses, carts, emigrating westward and forming a complete procession. Whole bands have to wait at the ferry-boat, which is a pretty large steam-boat and is almost always crowded. Others arrive from Pittsburg, Wheeling and other places on the Ohio, especially Louisville, in steamboats and flat-boats. Even this morning, 17th of November, a part of an Indian tribe has arrived here from the limits of Canada via Pittsburg and the remainder of the tribe is soon expected . . . they are all civilized, dress like white men and are going to form a settlement in the Arkansas Territory. I would suppose that they are Catholics."<sup>15</sup>

St. Charles County retained a large part of these seekers of new homes. For two years after the erection of the new church at Dardenne it was found too small for the crowd of worshippers who flocked to it from all sides. The Catholic settlers of Dardenne district had indeed become a church-going people, as the "Annual Letters" frequently testify.

Two other missionary stations on the Missouri River must be mentioned here, although they were first visited by Father Charles De La Croix, Cote Sans Dessein and Franklin. Mother Duchesne writes to the sainted Mother Barat from St. Charles under date of February 15, 1819: "Father De La Croix, a Fleming, and our extraordinary Confessor, has just come back from a part of Missouri which no missionaries had yet visited. There are now two stations there, one at Cote Sans Dessein, which he has consecrated to the Apostle St. Paul, and where there are twenty-two families; the other

<sup>14</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. VIII, p. 285.

<sup>15</sup> Van de Velde quoted by Garraghan in M. S. "History of the Missouri Province," p. 430.

at Boonslick or Franklin, he has dedicated to St. Francis de Sales. There he gave a mission attended even by Protestants, and fruitful for the Catholics. Some Protestants there are allowing their children to be instructed in the true faith by a catechist lately appointed"<sup>16</sup>

Cote Sans Dessein was first mentioned in authentic writing by Brackenridge in his *Journal*, published in Pittsburg in 1814:

"Cote Sans Dessein is a beautiful place situated on the N. E. side of the (Missouri) river and in sight of the Osage. It will in time become a considerable village. The beauty and fertility of the surrounding country cannot be surpassed. It is here that we met with the first appearance of prairies on the Missouri, but it is handsomely mixed with woodland . . . The name is given to the place from the circumstances of a single detached hill filled with limestone, standing on the bank of the river, about 500 yards long, and very narrow. The village has been established about three years; there are thirteen French families, and two or three of them Indian. They have handsome fields in the prairies, but the greater part of their time is spent in hunting."<sup>17</sup>

Brackenridge's prophecy was not fulfilled, as the village was swept away by the waters of the Mississippi. Cote Sans Dessein lay in Callaway County opposite the mouth of the Osage River, Franklin in Howard County opposite Boonville.

Bishop Du Bourg had told the Ladies of the Sacred Heart that the Jesuits of Georgetown intended to build a large establishment in Franklin. Father Verreidt visited both places on his quarterly rounds, which usually lasted six weeks. Father Timmermans, however, was the first Jesuit to come to Cote Sans Dessein.

---

<sup>16</sup> Erskine, Marjorie, "Life of Mother Du Chesne," p. 198.

<sup>17</sup> Brackenridge, Henry, *Journal*, p. 209.

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD IN THE WILDERNESS

The great currents of immigration that had set in towards the northwest from the eastern and southern states and from beyond the sea, naturally followed the courses of the rivers and streams and, spreading over the valleys and hillsides, formed innumerable settlements under primitive conditions. In the diocese of St. Louis there were three main arteries of this modern wandering of the nations, the Missouri, the Mississippi and the Illinois: these and their tributaries received the almost exclusive benefit of the mighty vivifying inundation. In regard to the spiritual interests of these newcomers, especially of the Catholics among them, the chief duty devolved upon the Jesuits, who were now firmly established in St. Louis, St. Charles and Florissant. The three great districts of recent settlements of Catholics were along the Missouri as far as Westport at the mouth of the Kansas River, then the Salt River district north of St. Louis along the Mississippi, and finally the northern part of Illinois which was under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of St. Louis.

As the Lazarist Fathers, and the secular clergy were settled in the old parishes and missionary stations of Missouri and Illinois south of the episcopal city, the Jesuits felt it incumbent upon themselves to foster the virtue of faith in the wilderness of the north on both sides of the Mississippi. In this work the newly established residence at St. Charles, being north of the Missouri River, proved a true coign of vantage to them.

The early Catholic immigration from beyond the sea to the valley of the Missouri was from the various parts of Germany, preeminently from Westphalia and Bavaria, and the Rhineland. These Catholic immigrants, however, were not the pioneer settlers: others had preceded them from Virginia and the Carolinas, from Illinois and Kentucky: The towns of Franklin, Boonville, Columbia, and Liberty had been founded by them. But the work of the Germans began in the early thirties and continued long after Father Quickenborne's advent in North Missouri. The land was cheap yet very good, and the glowing descriptions of Missouri's beauty and fertility by travelers like Duden,<sup>1</sup> as well as his followers already settled on their farms, drew ever in-

---

<sup>1</sup> Duden, Gottfried, "Bericht ueber eine Reise nach den westlichen Staaten Nord-Amerika's," 1829. Translation into English by William S. Beck in the "Missouri Historical Review," vol. XII, ss.

creasing numbers of sturdy, honest, and deeply religious families to that "Paradise of the West," Missouri. Though disappointed in their fervid anticipations, they did not despair, but set to work resolutely and created their own little paradise of a home for themselves out of the rough materials of the wilderness.

By one provision of the Concordat the Bishop of New Orleans ceded and surrendered "to the Society of Jesus the absolute and exclusive care of all the missions already established, and which shall hereafter be established on the Missouri River and its tributary streams." We have seen with what energy and holy zeal Father Van Quickenborne and his assistant Father Timmermans undertook this work Providence had carved out for them. Hancock Prairie and Cote-Sans-Dessein were among the earliest stations visited by the latter. Father De Theux in the Spring of 1827 sought out the Catholic settlements scattered within one hundred and twenty miles distance to the north and west. In 1828 Father Verhaegen arrived in Jefferson City, the first priest to set his eye on the rising walls of Missouri's Capital. Father Verreydt's quarterly rounds carried him over a great part of north-western Missouri as far as Council Bluffs in Iowa and Sugar Creek and St. Mary's in Kansas. One excursion in the direction of Franklin in Howard County lasted six weeks and brought him through Hancock Prairie, Cote-Sans-Dessein, the fords of the Gasconade, Jefferson City, Franklin and Booneville. These journeys had to be made on horseback; the hospitality extended to the missionary, though hearty and cheerful, was in accordance with the condition of the settlers, rough and poor. The Catholic population of the Missouri River district, in 1836 had grown to about six hundred. No doubt, many more lay hidden away in the nooks and corners of this wide area: but the actual number was, as yet, very small. What there was, however, formed the seed-grain for coming harvests. Here is the statement of the status of Catholicity in the interior of the state as preserved for us in the *Annual Letters* of 1837. The number of Catholic inhabitants follows the name of the town visited.

"On the right bank of the Missouri: (1) Manchester, 10, a great crowd of non-catholics, many of them well disposed towards the faith, also attended the services, (2) Merrimac, 14. (3) Washington, 118. The people here are building a church for us, 39 by 49 feet, and have given us ten acres of land. (4) Burbus, 11. (5) Bailey's Creek, 22. Preparations are here being made for a church. (6) French Village, 24. (7) Mary Creek, 80. The people wish to build a church. The place seems suitable for a residence. (8) Jefferson 9. (9) Booneville, 20. On the left bank: (10) Fayette, 1. (11) Columbia, 11. (12) Chariton, 2. (13) Rocheport, 26. A church here is projected.

(14) Cote-Sans-Dessein, 63. (15) Hancock Prairie, 14. (16) Portland, 14. (17) Lay Creek, 34. (18) Marthasville, 3. (19) Mount Pleasant, 30. On a single circuit of these stations, about 150 confessions were heard and 115 Communion distributed."<sup>2</sup>

One of the two principal highways of immigrant travel starting from St. Charles led in a northwesterly course through Lincoln, Pike, Ralls and Marion Counties and beyond. Along this road were a number of small towns, Troy, Alexandria, Bowling Green, New London, Palmyra. This entire region was called the "Salt River district," named so from a tributary of the Mississippi, having its mouth at Louisiana in Pike County. The first missionary to visit the Salt River district was Father Felix Verreydt. He reported that the Catholics were scattered over a wide stretch of territory. They were for the most part immigrants from Kentucky. Father John Elet, coming a little later, found that the children of all families excepting one, had been baptized by Protestant ministers: But he also records one beautiful instance of heroic faith among these forlorn settlers. A Mrs. Shields, whose husband was a Presbyterian, journeyed several times, with her daughters, all the way to Kentucky, for the purpose of receiving holy communion. She did not know that there were English-speaking priests any nearer. According to the report made by Father Van Quickenborne to the Maryland Superior, "Father Elet had three stations, Buffalo Creek, Louisiana and New London. Mass was said in private houses: and the services were well attended even by Protestants.

Many a touching scene the good Father witnessed in suddenly coming upon some poor Catholic family in some forest glade, believing itself to be forsaken by all and bereft forever of the consolations of religion, and now to have a visit, an un hoped for visit, from a Catholic priest. It filled the missionary's heart with joy and the hearts of the people with new hopes and aspirations.<sup>3</sup>

Father Verreydt continued his ministrations from his base of operations in St. Charles until the arrival of Father Peter Paul Lefevere, the future Bishop of Detroit in 1833. No Jesuit Residence was established in the district, although the plan of placing one at New London was spoken of by Father De Theux in 1831.

It was only after the Black Hawk war that the northern half of Illinois was opened to white settlers. Indeed, there were some small towns and villages on the Mississippi, and on the Illinois River: Yet the interior was one great primeval wilderness of prairies, with small

---

<sup>2</sup> Annual Letters of 1837.

<sup>3</sup> Letters of Fathers Elet, Verreydt and Van Quickenborne in the Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

clumps of woodland scattered here and there. The Indians, or rather the dread of Indian power and cruelty, held sway over the dreaming solitude.<sup>4</sup>

The Jesuit apostle of Northern Missouri had returned from the mission to a quiet nook in the College of St. Louis, where he taught Latin and thought of new conquests for Christ.

In the Spring of 1832 he began his missionary journeys in Illinois and southern Iowa, which earned for him the title of the Apostle of the Faith in Northwestern Illinois. Father Van Quickenborne made at least six missionary excursions during the years 1832, 1833 and 1834. The first of these made in May and June 1832 through the Salt River country in Missouri resulted in 42 baptisms: then crossing over to Illinois in August he exercised his ministry in Edwardsville, Wood River, Springfield, Lick Creek, Brush Creek, Bear Creek, Flat Branch, Sangamon River, Indian Creek, Head of the Rapids, (Warsaw) Crooked Creek, Fort Edwards and Quincy, then crossing over to Keokuk, Iowa, he returned to St. Louis by way of the Salt River country, including Florida in Monroe County, Palmyra and Louisiana. The next apostolic journey in February and March 1833 was confined to Illinois, chiefly Calhoun and Schuyler Counties, with a harvest of twenty-two baptisms. The fourth, during May and June 1833 led through St. Clair, Madison, Sangamon, Montgomery and Shelby Counties; the fifth in July 1833 included visits to Galena, Dubuque, Mill Seat and Gratiot's Grove. These names of places thus hurriedly enumerated may mean but little or nothing to a modern reader: Yet to Father Quickenborne they meant very much, each one representing a little oasis of the Faith amid the broad extent of a new world just rising from the dereliction of six thousand years.<sup>5</sup>

"In the course of a single year," as Father De Theux informs us, "Father Van Quickenborne travelled 4,373 miles, baptized 213 persons, 83 of whom were converts to the Faith, discovered more than 600 Catholics in Illinois and more than 700 in a part of Missouri, where eight or nine years before he knew of scarcely more than eight."<sup>6</sup>

These toilsome journeys in search of the scattered members of Christ's flock in Illinois and northeastern Missouri were after 1835 continued by other missionaries, diocesan and regular, Mazzuchelli, McMahon, St. Cyr, Lefevere, Hilary Tucker, Brickwedde, Hamilton and the Lazarists Raho and Parodi, the ever ready and tireless Van Quickenborne even then turning up in unexpected calls where his

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ford's "History of Illinois," *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Van Quickenborne to Rosati in Archives of the St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>6</sup> De Theux to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

presence seemed desirable. But in the Missouri settlements the Jesuit ministrations to the Catholic pioneers in town and village and country were extended, until 1838, from the Indian Missionary centers among the Kickapoos, the Potawattomi Indians both of Council Bluffs and of Sugar Creek.

To these important foundations we must, after reviewing the work done by the diocesan clergy and the Lazarist Fathers, turn our attention. It was pre-eminently for the Indian Missions the Jesuits had come to the West. What they accomplished in this arduous line of evangelization, so long delayed by adverse circumstances, yet so gladly undertaken, forms one of the crowning glories of the devoted Society of Jesus.

## THREE CROWDED YEARS OF BISHOP ROSATI'S LIFE

The period of Cathedral building by Bishop Rosati in St. Louis was also a period of strenuous and, we may add, efficient upbuilding of the spiritual edifice of the church in ever widening circles from the episcopal city as its center. The wisdom and energy and patient care of the Bishop in choosing the proper men for the various positions of trust, then supporting them as best he could, with the slender means at his disposal, and bearing with their shortcomings and idiosyncracies and even flat failures, are really worthy of the deepest admiration. On the other hand the spirit of devotion to their calling manifested by the great majority of the clergy, both regular and diocesan, and the members of the various sisterhoods, is truly inspiring. There may have been but few among Bishop Rosati's secular priests who could be called extraordinary men in natural gifts, or cultural acquirements: yet, for the most part, they were true priests, of strong and simple faith, and burning zeal for the salvation of souls. Of the two religious Orders, laboring in the diocese at that time, the Lazarists and the Jesuits, the same can be said and more: They had among their members a number of men, whose superior talents, made them worthy of the episcopate, though not all attained it, men like Portier, De Neckere, Odin, Timon, Van de Velde and others. Theirs was the honorable and arduous office of pathfinders and pioneers, and nobly have they fulfilled its requirements. But the secular clergy also were employed in the laborious task of planting the faith in the wild and refractory soil of early Missouri, Illinois and Arkansas.

Men of heroic mold like Peter Paul Lefevre, or at least, approaching the height of that untiring missionary's courage and constancy, men like John McMahon of Galena, Ennemond Dupuy of Arkansas, Irenaeus Saint Cyr of Chicago, Benedict Roux of Kansas City, Hilary Tucker of Quincy, Florentine Brickwedde founder of the German parish in Quincy and of the first parochial school in Illinois, and George Hamilton of Springfield and Alton, must forever occupy a distinguished place in our early ecclesiastical Annals, side by side with the great names of Van Quickenborne, Timon and Mazzuchelli and their associates. But the greatest name of all, the guiding spirit and loyal supporter of the grand missionary movement of the Thirties was Joseph Rosati, the Bishop of St. Louis. Before we enter upon the cheering account of the work of these lowly apostles of the diocesan

clergy, a brief conspectus of the more personal acts and events of the Bishop's life at this time must be given. The Diary of Bishop Rosati contains the story.<sup>1</sup>

On August 1st, 1831, Bishop Rosati blessed and laid the cornerstone of his Cathedral, thus solemnly initiating a new era of religious life in the city and of the greatest expansion of the diocese. On the 26th, he visited Major Biddle, wounded in the duel with Benton and, on the 29th, received him into the church, Father Saulnier administering the sacraments to the dying man.

On September 27th, the Bishop gave permission to the Sisters of Loretto at the Barrens to found a house at Apple Creek, where a new church was then near completion. Speaking of the German immigrants that made up the progressive settlement of Apple Creek, Bishop Rosati writes: "It is a good acquisition for the community at large and for religion in particular. These good Germans are very industrious and useful citizens and excellent Catholics."

On October 1st, the Bishop with a great cavalcade of priests and Seminarians rode from Perryville to St. Michaels, Fredericktown, and thence to Old Mines, where he dedicated the new church of St. Joachim, (October 9th.) and visited Richwoods, a new mission twelve miles distant from Old Mines. On November 3rd, Bishop Rosati and the trustees of St. Louis Cathedral sold to Bishop Du Bourg a part of the annual payments due from Messrs. Martin and Lavail on account of the lease of the northern half of the church block.

On the 20th, at St. Mary's Seminary he ordained John McMahon, Ennemond Dupuy, Vital Van Clostere, Peter Paul Lefevere and Peter F. Beauprez to the priesthood, and Irenaeus St. Cyr to deaconship. Proceeding across the river to Kaskaskia he confirmed Mrs. Morisson, once a bitter opponent of the Catholic religion, but now its most strenuous defender.

On the 28th, he sends Father Saulnier and Beauprez to the mission of Arkansas.

The diocese now had seventeen churches and thirty-five priests. The year 1832 opens auspiciously with the announcement from Rome that the Pope had assigned three thousand dollars to the building fund of the Cathedral. On March 6th, the Bishop received a visit from an emissary of John Smith, the Mormon leader, who requested the privilege of preaching his doctrine in the Cathedral.

The Bishop demands, as an evidence of the divine origin of his mission, that the preacher of the new religion perform the miracle of raising the dead to life. The Mormon preacher then departs. On March

---

1 Diary in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

11th, a large number of German Catholic families arrive in St. Louis: the bishop directs them to the neighborhood of Old Mines. On the 17th, Deodat Taylor, a convert from Montreal, proposes to bring his paper *The Catholic Press* to St. Louis. "I will assist him with all my power." The first *Shepherd of the Valley* was the outcome of this visit. On April 22nd, two students from the Barrens leave for Rome to pursue their theological studies in the College of the Propaganda. They were Hilary Tucker and George Hamilton. Both of these young men kept up a spirited correspondence with Bishop Rosati all through their stay in the Eternal City. On the next day Fathers Paillasson and Lefevere start for their mission in New Madrid. On May 6th, Father Verhaegen, at the Bishop's request, blessed the chapel of St. Mary, in the building that once housed the St. Louis College, now suppressed in favor of the new St. Louis College of the Jesuits. St. Mary's Chapel was assigned to the Catholic Negroes: In 1834 it became the house of worship for the German Catholics.

On May 15th, the Bishop was overjoyed at receiving from the Leopoldine Association of the Austrian Empire the munificent sum of 20,000 francs. Of this sum he gave to Deodat Taylor \$200.00 for the paper to be established in St. Louis, and to Father Francis Cellini \$100, for the Sisters House of Fredericktown, and \$500, for the new church at Apple Creek. July 4th, the national holiday was celebrated with all patriotic appurtenances of the occasion. On the 16th, the Bishop administered confirmation at Portage des Sioux. Sixty new German Catholic families have lately arrived to infuse fresh life into the old parish.

Bishop De Neckere is determined on resigning his charge of New Orleans and wishes Anthony Blanc to succeed him. Father Blanc is appointed De Neckere's coadjutor, but sends back the bulls of appointment. Both are in earnest consultation with Bishop Rosati. On August 10th, Bishop Rosati promises \$300 to Father Bouillier for his new house at Old Mines. On the 16th, Father Van Clostere is appointed to Prairie du Rocher, O'Haras, English Settlement, James Settlement and Harrisonville. On the 20th, Father Verhaegen blessed and laid the cornerstone for the new stone church of St. Peter at Gravois, now called Kirkwood, and two days later the Bishop sent Father McMahon to the northernmost part of the diocese, Fever River and Prairie du Chein. On September 2nd, the Bishop consecrated the new Church of St. Ferdinand of Florissant. On October 4th, he sends Father Dupuy to the Arkansas mission, promising him an annual subsidy of \$150, and giving him the \$400, which Father Saulnier had collected in New Orleans for a church at the Post of Arkansas.

On Oct. 13th, the Bishop instructs Father Timon at the Barrens that the little Loretto community of Apple Creek be recalled to the Motherhouse, and that the Sisters may proceed to St. Michaels, Fredericktown and New Madrid.

On December 3rd, Father Lefevere is appointed to the missions of the Salt River region in Northeastern Missouri, with residence at St. Paul.

Almost all December was spent by Bishop Rosati in Bardstown in giving comfort and counsel to Bishop Flaget in what was probably his most serious trouble. The venerable Bishop of Bardstown had resigned his position, and Bishop David succeeded him. But the entire diocese was shocked and grieved at the idea of losing their saintly prelate. . . Bishop Rosati's advice was decisive. Bishop David sent his resignation to Rome, which was accepted, and Bishop Flaget was reappointed, with Father Chabrat as his coadjutor. Thus Bishop Flaget came to be the first and the third Bishop of Bardstown, David being the second.

Bishop Rosati started for St. Louis on January 24th, 1833, and arrived there on February 1st. He brought with him M. Marellano as Cathedral organist at a salary of \$100. On the 4th, he promulgated the Decrees of the First Provincial Council of Baltimore and issued the call for a Diocesan Synod to assemble on the third Sunday after Pentecost. On the 12th, he gives Father Timon permission to send Loretto Sisters to Old Mines. The Sisters of Charity are building a house on their lot in Carondelet. The Easter Collection in the Cathedral amounted to \$150.

On April 16th, Bishop Rosati received a petition from Chicago, which was then a rough little frontier town, asking for a priest. A. H. Taylor, a brother Deodat, brought the petition and explained that there were about one hundred Catholics in the place, and many more non-catholics inclined to join the Church: and that the Indians at Chicago had received permission from the U. S. Government to donate 2500 acres of land near the town to any priest that might be sent there. Prompt action was necessary, said Mr. Taylor. The Bishop acted immediately. On the next day he wrote in his Diary that, considering the urgent necessity in which the Catholics of Chicago found themselves, he had made use of the faculties of Vicar General conferred upon him by the Bishop of Bardstown, the ordinary of the Eastern part of the State of Illinois, he had decided to send Father John Mary Saint Cyr to that place, until further notice, and that he had informed Bishop Flaget concerning his act and the motives for it. On April 18th, Father St. Cyr was on his way across the boundless prairie to Chicago where he arrived on May 1, 1833.

In August the Bishop receives an invitation to attend the Second Provincial Council of Baltimore. John B. Purcell had been appointed Bishop of Cincinnati and Frederick Rezé of Detroit. The latter invited Bishop Rosati to act as his consecrator on October 6th, in Cincinnati on his way to Baltimore. Bishop Rosati accepted both invitations.

On September 23rd, the Bishop starts for Baltimore in company of Fathers John M. Odin, C. M. and Peter De Smet, S. J. At Cincinnati he consecrates Bishop Rezé (October 6th). The Council opens on October 20th. As far as Bishop Rosati was concerned, the most important business was the division of Illionis between the dioceses of St. Louis and Vincennes. The special Committee of three Bishops, with Rosati as chairman, proposed that the limits dividing the two adjoining dioceses, should be a line drawn from Fort Massac on the Ohio River, and north to that part of the Illinois River called the *Great Rapids*, eight miles above the town of Ottawa in La Salle County and thence to the Northern limits of Illinois. The report was approved by the Council and later on by the Holy See, thus rendering the provisional administration of Western Illinois by St. Louis, a permanent one. The Mission of Chicago now fell to the care of the Bishop of Vincennes: but at Bishop Brute's earnest request, Father St. Cyr was sent back to Chicago.

It was on the occasion of the Council that Bishop Rosati made the acquaintance of Peter Richard Kenrick of Philadelphia, Vicar General, President of the Seminary, and editor of the *Catholic Herald*.

The young priest seems to have made a favorable impression on the visiting prelate: on a later occasion Bishop Rosati described our Peter Richard with the comprehensive term: *sacerdos numeris omnibus absolutus*. A Decree was proposed and accepted by which all the faculties which the priests of all American dioceses enjoyed outside of their own through a certain compact of the various bishops, were declared to have ceased. But all the Bishops gave each other the privilege of exercising all priestly functions in their respective dioceses.

By the end of the year Bishop Rosati was at home once more. On December 28th, he records that he had given Withnell and Couatts the contract to build the bell tower of his Cathedral, of cut stone, forty feet high, at a cost of \$4000.

According to Bishop Rosati's report on the condition of the diocese there were nineteen Congregations with churches, and ten without churches. Thirteen with resident priest, fourteen that received regular visits from elsewhere, and four that had been founded within the year. There were thirty-six priests, the bishop included: three had died in the year, six had joined the diocese, and two had been ordained. Ten of the total

number were Lazarists, eleven Jesuits and fourteen of the diocesan clergy.

The congregations with churches were St. Louis, Carondelet, Florissant, St. Charles, Portage des Sioux, Dardenne, Gravois, Salt River, Old Mines, Potosi, St. Genevieve, Little Canada, The Barrens, Apple Creek and New Madrid, all in the State of Missouri: then in Illinois, Cahokia, O'Harasburg, Prairie du Rocher and Kaskaskia. St. Mary's Seminary had four priests and five brothers and fourteen Seminarians, the College at the Barrens had four priests: the St. Louis College of the Jesuits had six priests: the Novitiate of the Jesuits at Florissant had one priest and a number of brothers and novices.

Father De Smet is marked as having been transferred to another diocese. He was absent in Europe, on business of his Order, from 1833 to 1837.

On his return to St. Louis he was sent with one Father and two brothers to found the Mission among the Potawattomi at Council Bluffs. The Nuns of the Sacred Heart had three Convents: in St. Louis in Florissant, and in St. Charles with twenty-one members. The Sisters of Loretto had four houses: Bethlehem at the Barrens, St. Josephs at Apple Creek, St. Michaels at Fredericktown and the late foundation at New Madrid with twenty-seven sisters. The Sisters of Charity had the Hospital and Orphanage in St. Louis, and House in Carondelet with twelve sisters. The Sisters of the Visitation at Kaskaskia were the latest accession to the Sisterhoods of St. Louis Diocese, numbering six choir-sisters, one lay-sister, one novice, the well known Mary Josephine Barber, and one postulant. The Orphanage of the Sisters of Charity contained twenty boys, and that of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, seventeen girls.

Thus the New Year 1834 dawned upon many slowly evolving plans for the perfection and extension of the diocese. Everything looked propitious.

The new Cathedral was nearing completion; St Louis was firmly established as the center of Catholicity in the West. The great waves of immigration from Catholic Ireland, and the Catholic portions of Germany were carrying their precious human freight to all parts of Missouri and Illinois, and depositing it, along the rivers in towns and villages and country settlements. "A good number of German Catholics have come to St. Louis," writes Bishop Rosati about this time. "I directed some of them to Mr. Roussin at Richwood, where there is a large body of public land vacant, and I think they will find the place suitable to them. Others have been to look at the country towards St. Charles, others towards Belleville. A large number of the same class are to come. I expect a good priest from Lorraine, who speaks French

and German and is actually parish priest in the diocese of Nancy. St. Mary's will soon be finished, and any congregation in this diocese would feel proud to have such a fine church."

On January 26th, Father Joseph Anthony Lutz said Mass for the German Catholics in the Chapel of St. Mary and preached to them in their native language. The Bishop ordered this practice to be continued throughout the year, and all Sundays and Feast days of obligation. On this matter we would quote Msgr. Holweck:

"When Father Lutz, the 'German priest,' in November 1831, settled down at St. Louis permanently, a new field of labor opened to him. A large number of Catholic families had emigrated from the various principalities of Germany and had settled in the rising city on the western bank of the Mississippi. For their religious needs they came to Father Lutz, for he alone could speak their language. He has been accused of purposely neglecting his countrymen. He may have shared the feeling then prevailing at the Cathedral, the fear of a third language raising its head and demanding recognition. There had been so much bitter feeling in the parish of St. Louis on account of the two languages, English and French; and now the Germans also demanded sermon and prayer and instruction in their own language, the compatriots of those Germans who had caused so much strife at Philadelphia, Baltimore and elsewhere. Good Bishop Rosati, so full of zeal for the salvation of souls, was mortally afraid of them and their priests.

Still, something had to be done for the Germans. Because a third language could not be introduced in the Cathedral, the Bishop gave orders that the German sermon should be preached in St. Mary's chapel, south of the Cathedral, in the church block. This chapel had been blessed May 6th, 1832, and had been used for the negroes. There, on Septuagesima Sunday, January 24th, 1834, Father Lutz, for the first time in the history of St. Louis, preached in German to his assembled compatriots. Probably this was the first German sermon Lutz preached in his life.<sup>2</sup>

In the "Relation of the Consecration of St. Louis Cathedral" which Bishop Rosati sent to Rome, he writes about the language question and the Germans: "The people speak three languages: English, French and German. Very many Catholics belonging to the German nation, have come and are still coming and have settled in this diocese and city. Most of them are pious and industrious and are an honor to the religion which they profess in word and deed. We have to preach in these three languages. Two priests and one cleric, with the Bishop, constitute the

---

<sup>2</sup> Holweck, F. G., "Public Places of Worship in St. Louis Prior to Palm Sunday, 1843," "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review, vol. 4, pp. 6 and 7.

clergy of this parish. In the meanwhile a Jesuit Father preaches in English.'"<sup>3</sup>

In the course of time it proved irksome to the Jesuit Fathers to be obliged to preach every Sunday at the Cathedral, after their laborious duties of teaching at the College. But they continued their office of charity until after the Synod of 1839.

On April 2nd, 1834, the consecration of Father Bouillier's beautiful Church at Old Mines, under the invocation of St. James the Greater, was performed by Bishop Rosati, Father John Timon preaching on the occasion.

The Pentecost collection at the Cathedral amounted to \$94.10. On June 29th the corner-stone of the new Church at Carondelet, was blessed and laid by Bishop Rosati under the invocation of "Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel." On the same day the Bishop received notice from Rome, that Father Jean-Jean had been appointed Bishop of New Orleans. Father Jean-Jean refused to accept. On October 21st, Bishops Flaget, Purcell, and Bruté arrived for the solemnities of the consecration of the Cathedral. The consecration was held on the 26th by the Bishop of St. Louis, the sermon was preached by the Bishop of Cincinnati.

On the 28th, the Bishop Elect of Vincennes, Simon Gabriel Bruté was consecrated by Bishop Rosati, with the assistance of Bishops Flaget and Purcell. On the following Sunday after Solemn Highmass and Benediction the Blessed Sacrament was carried in procession to the lower chapel, and placed in the altar, dedicated to its cultus, where it shall be preserved hereafter: on November 3rd the three visiting Bishops departed for the east. As a kind of diversion the Bishop started on a round of episcopal visits to the Barrens, thence to St. Michaels, the Old Mines and back again to St. Michaels. The journey was performed on horseback. On the way to St. Michaels the Bishop lost his pectoral cross. On December 26th, 1834, Bishop Rosati received the Papal Bull extending his diocese to the line he had suggested, from Fort Massac to the Great Rapids of the Illinois River, eight miles above the town of Ottawa in La Salle County, Illinois. The varied incidents and activities recorded in this chapter of Bishop Rosati's life during the three years intervening between the inception and the completion of the building of the Cathedral, convey but an inadequate idea of the total work accomplished by him. His multifarious correspondence with all manner of men, high and low, clergy and lay-men, official and private would, in itself, have exhausted the mental and physical re-

---

3 Cf. Chapter IX of this book.

sources of an ordinary man.<sup>4</sup> Then the “*sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum*,” which he could not share with any one, the constant study and effort to find the men and the means for his projects, and the kindly offices of friendship extended to all his priests, the pious care for the various Sisterhoods employed in his diocese in their labor of love for the Indians, the poor, the sick, the aged and the orphans, and lastly his private devotions and meditations and public functions and instructions filled almost every moment of his laborious life. But, really great is he that can accomplish through others the great things he could never accomplish by himself: and such a man was Bishop Joseph Rosati of St. Louis.

---

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Rosati was a graceful writer of letters, combining the weight of matter with the lightness of touch.

folio 2<sup>o</sup>.

a Territory has been created under the name of Wisconsin Territory — which includes  
1<sup>o</sup> the Southern part of the former north west territory already divided in some counties, Iowa County &c.,

2<sup>o</sup> some other territory West of the river Mississippi, north of the Missouri State and Territory — its extent & limits I do not know.

It is in that part, West of the Mississippi, that Dubuque is situated, in a region that is now under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of St Louis

Laprairie au Chien, Coeff &c are not out that western part of the Wisconsin Terr<sup>y</sup> but under the jurisdiction of Detroit (am I right?) doubt it  
in that situation

What must be the limits of the New Diocess ?.....



183 Mg Brute

BISHOP BRUTE MAP OF WISCONSIN



## GALENA, DUBUQUE AND PRAIRIE DU CHIEN

## I

When the Black Hawk war came to an end in the Fall of 1832, and opened the Rock River country, just south of Galena, to immigration, the necessity of providing for the spiritual needs of the Catholic population of the Fever River country, became insistent once more. The name of the region was sufficiently ominous, and proved to be justified by the early death of the two first resident priests sent there by Bishop Rosati. Fever River is the name of a little stream in the northwest corner of Illinois. The region round about it and also beyond the Mississippi, is rich in lead mines, and very early drew a considerable number of Irish settlers, to the towns of Galena, Gratiots Grove, Irish Grove and farther north to Prairie du Chien. Galena was considered the best location for a church and priest in the Fever River country. But who shall undertake the arduous task? An Irish priest would seem to be best adapted to meet the prevailing conditions; there was but one available priest in the diocese, Father John McMahon, quite recently ordained at the Barrens.

It is a strange pathetic figure that here breaks into the light of day, one whose brief career in the priesthood called forth a good deal of wonderment and even ungentle criticism. Yet Father John McMahon of Fever River was a good man and faithful priest, and his career, though extraordinary, was perfectly in order.

John McMahon and his wife Judith emigrated from Ireland to the United States about the year 1825, but having no children, and being desirous of a higher life, they determined on a separation, he to enter the holy priesthood, and she to become a Dominican nun in Ireland. With the consent of Bishop Rosati, who was fully informed on these circumstances, Mr. McMahon was admitted to the Seminary of St. Marys of the Barrens, whilst Judith, his wife, returned to Dublin, for the purpose of entering a convent of the Dominican Sisterhood. But, as Bishop Rosati wrote to Mr. McMahon, November 6th, 1828, "Mrs. McMahon, not being able to pay the sum required for admission into any of the religious houses of the Dominican Order in Ireland, was intrusted by the Archbishop of Dublin with the care of the Penitent's Asylum, Townsend Street, Dublin. She will make a vow of perpetual chastity to facilitate the dispensation for your being promoted to Holy Orders, which I shall ask from Rome."<sup>1</sup> Mr.

<sup>1</sup> For further documents cf. Rothensteiner, "The Northeastern Part of the Diocese of St. Louis under Bishop Rosati," in "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. II, p. 175 ss.

McMahon continued his studies with marked earnestness and profit, and taught English and some other branches of learning in the College at the Barrens. Dimissorials having arrived from Dublin, April 17, 1829, and dispensation being granted by Pope Pius VIII, John McMahon was ordained to the priesthood on November 20th, 1831, in company with that indomitable servant of God, Peter Paul Lefevere. After his ordination Father McMahon was employed in the sacred ministry in the vicinity of the Seminary. On April 13th, 1832, he obtained permission to build a church at Baily's Landing, about eighteen miles below St. Mary's on the Mississippi. Of this first missionary venture he writes to his Bishop with youthful fervor: "The inhabitants of Baily's have unanimously agreed to build a church immediately, provided it meets Your approbation. I replied that I had no doubt about that and further, that there was a probability that You would also subscribe five dollars towards the undertaking. I promised two dollars which will exhaust my purse.

The Church is to be thirty by twenty-five for the present, the Catholics being only few. But it is presumed that many Protestants will attend each Sunday. I marked out the ground for the erection of the Church on a beautiful mound within about five hundred yards from the river."<sup>2</sup> Bishop Rosati granted the desired petition on condition, however, that the people set aside a piece of land sufficient for the purposes of a parish; and he subscribed five dollars towards the building fund, as we learn from a letter of April 13th, 1832.

On August 22nd, 1832, Father McMahon, the priest of less than a year's experience in the ministry, was appointed pastor of Galena and Prairie du Chien, whilst his fellow student, Peter Paul Lefevere, was sent to the wilds of northeastern Missouri with his residence at St. Pauls, Salt River. Bishop Rosati must, at an earlier date, have intimated to Father McMahon his destination to the far northern mission, for on July 28th, 1832, the restless priest expresses his fears that, if his journey be very much delayed, the river might become so shallow as to render it impossible for boats: or, still later might become frozen. In view of these possibilities he requests the Bishop's order by return mail, to prepare immediately for the intended journey. Besides his position at the Seminary had become so disagreeable and irksome, that it appeared impossible for him to continue under present arrangements. The Bishop answered on August 7th, 1832: "You must come to St. Louis as soon as possible not to lose the opportunity of the steam boats, that yet go up to Galena. Take notice that you go alone. When there, you will see if the inhabitants of Prairie du Chien are able and willing to support a priest."<sup>3</sup> By August 27th,

---

<sup>2</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese, McMahon to Rosati, May 27, 1832.

<sup>3</sup> Archives, Rosati to McMahon, August 7, 1832.

Father McMahon was on his way to his final destination. From the "Foot of the Rapids" near the present Keokuk, he sent a letter to his Bishop with a brief account of his experiences by the way. In the hurry and excitement of his departure from St. Louis he had forgotten to take along some of the things needed for Mass, as altar-breads and wax-candles, and a pair of large smoothing irons for baking hosts. On the boat he had met an "intelligent passenger" with whom he had discussed the subject of the Real Presence. This discussion he had then written out in the form of a dialogue. Would the Bishop not be kind enough to hand it to Mr. Taylor, the newly arrived editor of the *Catholic Press*. This paper was to be brought from Hartford to St. Louis, but the plan was never carried out; Deodat Taylor began publishing the *Shepherd of the Valley*.

On his arrival at Galena, Father McMahon found himself immersed, day and night, in ministerial avocations. He found no time to write to his beloved Bishop until September 27th, 1832. He had already gained two converts, and baptized several children, the parents of whom were Protestants, and "ferreted out some of the careless ones" among the Catholics and got them to Confession. He had validated several marriages invalidly contracted, one of them being "a desperate case," the Catholic having lived with a Baptist woman for three years. Of another case the zealous Father writes: "I have been, about forty miles in the interior of the country, where I had to marry a couple who were living in the state of sin for a long time, and have had children, some of whom I baptized. This affair giving much scandal in the neighborhood, I concluded it as quickly as possible, without any requisition relative to banns, or anything else, but gave them some instructions in the presence of a considerable number, who assembled upon the occasion, and departed."<sup>4</sup> But amid all his labors and endeavors dire poverty and want were staring him in the face. His trunk with books and clothes had not arrived: the weather was turning cold, and he had no money to buy even firewood. "People are talking of building a church here," he wrote consoling himself with the bright prospect: "besides they have employed a man to attend me, so things may be better after some time."<sup>5</sup>

Conditions at Galena must have improved after this: perhaps Father McMahon learned the knack of placing his wants before the people, so that they could no longer disregard them. In his next letter of October 4th, 1832, he strikes a more cheerful note. "The people have rented for him a commodious house which will suit for the twofold purpose, a Church and apartments for the priest, until they get able to build a new one. I have now got carpenters at work

<sup>4</sup> Archives, McMahon to Rosati, September 27, 1832.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

making some necessary alterations.”<sup>6</sup> Then he begs the Bishop “To send him some ornaments for the altar, particularly a picture, and also a missal. “I am kept continually going; so there is not much danger of getting the gout and from the cholera, O Lord deliver us.”<sup>7</sup>

As to the cholera Father McMahon wrote on November 16th, 1832: “We have had no cases of cholera here for some days, I continue thankful to my God for having spared the whole of my congregation except one, who it is believed, died by her own want of timely care of herself.” But the ordinary demands of life were pressing heavily on Father McMahon’s buoyant spirit. “I called a meeting last Sunday to ascertain what I had to depend on for my support. A list was formed which contains the amount and individual names, who subscribed about \$360.00. I told them I wanted a sum immediately to buy my winter’s wood and some clothes, but none has as yet come. Winter is already commenced here, and no wood, nor warm clothes.” Bishop Rosati’s letter had informed the lonely missionary of the death of his wife Judith in Dublin, for which kind attention as likewise for every other connected with my solicitude,” he begged the Bishop “to accept the breathing of a grateful heart.”<sup>8</sup>

“Our little church,” Father McMahon writes, “is crowded every Sunday with a few of all the town’s people. I look forward to better times, but at present my situation is not to be envied . . . I have been thinking of selling my books by auction to get some money. If you have any masses, send me a few.” As to going to Prairie du Chien, Father McMahon, excused his failure, first, because no conveyance was offered him by the people of that district, and second because he had been informed, that a French priest had been there for some time and intended to stay all winter. Father McMahon did not know, who he was.

Father McMahon was of a naturally cheerful disposition. But Galena was a lonely place for a priest who had always enjoyed the company of cultured people. How glad he was when he heard that a certain Mr. Rattigan, a student of the Barrens, was coming to share his hospitality and to recuperate his health, that had been shattered. But instead of a boon this visit proved to be a heavy burden and vexation.

On February 14th, he writes to his Bishop: “Mr. Rattigan has left my place having previously abused me in the presence of a lad who stops with me for his education.” Father McMahon had opened a school, to make out a living. Mr. Rattigan went to Pittsburg and asked admission into the diocese of Philadelphia. But Father McMahon was too busy to be worried long by such incidents. Making converts

---

<sup>6</sup> Archives, McMahon to Rosati, October 4, 1832.

<sup>7</sup> Archives, McMahon to Rosati, l. c.

<sup>8</sup> Letters of McMahon, *passim*.

to the Faith, was his constant endeavor. "I received on Friday, in due form, a lady of quality into the Church, and today I received a visit from one of the principal prostitutes of the town, attired in all her grandeur. During her stay, I gave her some instructions and advice, lent her a book to read and dismissed her until next Tuesday, when she promised to come to Confession. Vice of all kind was rampant in the town filled with wild adventurers; among them also the vice of gambling." I delivered three discourses on several Sundays on the nefarious practice of gambling, on which God has evinced His disapprobation. For immediately after, the cards and card-tables of the various houses in the town were upset and committed to the fire. If God grants me like success in overturning the rendezvous of iniquity called "bad houses," I shall call my time well spent, indeed."<sup>9</sup>

Father McMahon, nothing daunted by the opposition he met, returned to the attack again and again, with some success, it seems, in changing even stony hearts, as his letter of March 3rd, would testify:

On Quadragesima Sunday I administered the Sacrament of Baptism to a young creature, who has hitherto been progressing through the most vile path of immorality. In the course of my instructions on the Sacrament, I called her the Magdalen of Galena. Two of her former suitors were present, whose countenances seemed to speak disapprobation at being thus deprived of a companion on their road to perdition. My instructions after Mass were on the Epistle of the day, at the close of which, looking steadfastly at these heroes of iniquity, I exclaimed in emphatical language: 'Let the night stroller now divest himself of the works of darkness and put on the armor of Light, Justice, Sobriety and Chastity. Say, ye candidates for perdition, what have you hitherto been doing, what is your mind now plotting, though curiosity detains your person here? Shall I answer the question for you? Adding further iniquities to the black catalogue of your crimes, which, like an accumulated heap of stubble, the Justice of an offended Deity will one day set fire to, when you shall burn, if you repent not, for all eternity.' One of these sinners has signified his wish to be instructed. I also received publicly into the Church a few days ago a lady of respectability in the church, and have now more under a course of instruction. One of the noted gamblers has also come forward and is about getting his family baptized. He has already put down his name as a subscriber to my support. The Rosary I say every evening during Lent, after which I give an instruction. The Catechism I teach every day to the children, some of whom I am preparing against Easter for their first Communion, and every Sunday, I preach to a crowded audience, thus far, thanks to God. I feel my health somewhat shaken and have taken the liberty to take a little

---

<sup>9</sup> McMahon to Rosati, February 14, 1833.

bread every morning with a cup of coffee, which I hope will not displease you."<sup>10</sup>

Most humbly submissive to his Bishop and the rules of the Holy Church, Father McMahon would not brook any interference with his spiritual authority from laymen, however powerful they might be. On March 17th, he wrote his last letter to Bishop Rosati: "Since my last I have received one more of the unfortunate girls of the town, who is now undergoing the preparatory steps toward becoming a good Christian. I have much hope of her continuance, but the people in general are of a different opinion and seem not quite pleased that she has been thus far countenanced, but I laconically replied to their insinuations, that I am determined to do my duty at the point of the sword, and that I could not suffer any layman to dictate to me. Ever since they are silenced, and the poor girl is every day growing more fervent, etc. An Episcopalian lady makes her first communion today, I feel confident she will make a good R. Catholic."<sup>11</sup>

But troubles of a more serious kind were threatening the Church of Galena: "The person that owns the house, that I at present occupy as a Church, has given notice for us to quit. What will be done, I am not able to say: but, I know the people are too poor this year to build one. I shall see You, God willing sometime in May."<sup>12</sup> These pathetic words were Father McMahon's last message to his beloved Bishop. . On June 19th, 1833, he died at Galena, without a priest to cheer and comfort his last hours. It was the cholera that struck him down ten months after his coming to Fever River, a martyr of his devotion to duty and of his love for poor, wayward souls.

From a brief note of Father Charles Quickenborne, S.J. it appears that Father Joseph V. Wiseman was sent to Galena immediately after Father McMahon's death came to the notice of Bishop Rosati. Father Wiseman performed the last rites of the Church over Father McMahon's remains which were laid to rest in the public cemetery of Galena.

---

<sup>10</sup> McMahon to Rosati, March 3, 1833. The Leuten Fast, at that time, did not permit bread in the morning; but McMahon was dispensed on account of impaired health.

<sup>11</sup> McMahon to Rosati, March 17, 1833.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem.

## GALENA, DUBUQUE AND PRAIRIE DU CHIEN

## II

Father Van Quickenborne, S. J., spent a few days in July 1832, at Dubuque and Galena in order to make arrangements for the development of the religious possibilities of both places. Dubuque as a village is coeval with Galena; as a trading-post, however, it is much older, being visited and explored for its mineral wealth as early as 1786 by Julien Dubuque, who two years later obtained from the Indians a grant of 140,000 acres of land. Here M. Dubuque built his trading post around which the city that bears his name was to rise and flourish and prosper. Up to 1835 only three visits of priests at Dubuque are recorded, and no serious move had been made to form a religious establishment. But now, with the return of order and the opening of vast tracts of land to settlers, the time seemed propitious.<sup>1</sup> Meetings were held at Dubuque and at Galena, of which Father Van Quickenborne, S. J., has given a full account in his Memorandum left with James Fanning at Dubuque, July 19, 1823.

“At an aggregate meeting of the Roman Catholics living at the Dubuque Mines on the 14th of July, 1833, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted.

1. That, as it is the general wish that a Catholic Church be built in this vicinity, the permit shall be obtained in the name of the Right Rev. Dr. Rosati, Bishop of St. Louis.

2. That, as a majority of four have declared the town of Dubuque or its vicinity to be the most suitable neighborhood for the contemplated church, the designation of the precise spot shall be left to the decision of the committee to be appointed, or a majority of these.

3. That, the following gentlemen do form the said committee: Viz., James Fanning, James McCabe, Patrick O'Mara, N. Gregoire, and Thomas Fitzpatrick. Mr. James Fanning was unanimously chosen treasurer, into whose hands the subscriptions and donations shall be paid; of which moneys received and expended an account shall be given by the same treasurer to the clergyman appointed by the Bishop to the congregation.

---

<sup>1</sup> All the facts contained in this chapter are derived from MS. sources in the Archives of the St. Louis Archdiocese. In our citations from Archives, the Archives of the St. Louis Archdiocese are meant. They are found in the Chancery Office.

4. That the said committee shall have power to nominate a president out of their number, and he or two of its members to have power to call for a meeting of the committee, and a majority of them to be a quorum to transact all the business relative to the building of the church.

5. The building to be raised by the subscriptions of the Catholics at this place and to be as follows: A hewed log building, 25 feet by 20 feet and 10 feet or 12 feet high, with a shingle roof and plank floor, with four windows, each having 28 lights of 8 by 10 and shutters, the door to be 8 feet by 5 feet."

From Dubuque Father Van Quickenborne crossed over to Galena for the purpose of placing that congregation on a solid financial basis. The people were willing, and a good start was made, as the following document, signed by Father Van Quickenborne, would indicate:

"A copy of the subscription paper for Galena left with Nicholas Dowling.

The enclosed five acres of ground near Galena have been made over by Patrick Gray to the Right Rev. Dr. Rosati, Bishop of St. Louis, for the purpose of raising thereon a church and a house for the officiating clergyman. The inhabitants of this town and its vicinity are respectfully requested to give their assistance towards the accomplishment of so estimable an object.

The frame building in contemplation is to be 25 feet by 35 feet. The moneys to be collected by the committee consisting of five gentlemen, and they to give their accounts to the clergyman sent by the Bishop to the congregation. Therefore, we the undersigned, do oblige ourselves and assigns to pay within six months from this date the sums annexed to our respective names.

Galena 19th of July, 1833.

Patrick Gray, . . . Blockhouse	Leopold Massner . . . . .	\$10.00
Laurence Ryan, pd. \$20 . . . .	Patrick Colligan . . . . .	10.00
Alexander Butterworth . . . .	Laurent Robidoux . . . . .	10.00
James Nagle . . . . .	Kiernan Murray . . . . .	10.00
Michael Murphy . . . . .	Pat. Sullivan . . . . .	5.00
John Reilly . . . . .	James Murphy,	
Patrick Murphy, paid . . . .	Dennis Murphy & Pat. S. . . .	25.00
Claymore Le Page . . . . .	John Ryan . . . . .	10.00
Thomas Drum . . . . .	Dennis O'Neil . . . . .	5.00
Martin Gray . . . . .		
		85.00
		140.00
C. F. Van Quickenborne.		225.00

Other sums which can be relied on..... 200.00

---

425.00''<sup>2</sup>

This Memorandum had reference to the church itself. In regard to the affairs of Father McMahan we have from Father Van Quickenborne's hand the following:

"Memorandum left with Nicholas Dowling and published in the church of Galena.

1. The Catholics of this country, to whom great praise is due for their liberality in the support of religion, are respectfully requested by the underwritten to persevere in these laudable sentiments, and to pay the subscription they may have made heretofore for the support of the late Rev. Mr. McMahan, some of which have not as yet been paid. The proceeds of these subscriptions will be employed 1st, in paying the debts contracted by Mr. McMahan and not paid. 2. In raising the building of the contemplated church, or for the support of the clergyman who, it is hoped, will be sent by the Bishop.

2. The debt contracted by Mr. McMahan amounted to \$273. It is hoped that the sale of furniture which is in his house, including horse and dearborn, will cover this sum. However, as these things are sold sometimes very cheap, it would be very desirable that they should be bought for the use of the next clergyman, and in this case the payment of the sums subscribed for the support of Mr. McMahan which are not as yet paid would be absolutely necessary.

3. The sacred vestments and everything appertaining to the chapel will be kept as things belonging to the Bishop.

4. The books of Mr. McMahan show that he has received from these subscriptions made for his support about \$340.

The carpenter's bill or fitting out the chapel amounts to \$75 and has been paid by a subscription. The house rent is as yet to be paid and amounts to \$15. The rent of the house belonging to Mrs. Farra and used as a church has been paid by a subscription.

5. The proceeds of the subscriptions will be placed in the hands of Mr. Nicholas Dowling, Sr., subject to the order of the Bishop for the purposes for which they shall have been paid."<sup>3</sup>

The erection of a Church-building was, of course, the main purpose of Father Van Quickenborne's visit. Four hundred and twenty dollars does not look very large as a building fund, yet in these early days it went much farther than it would at present. How very prudent

---

<sup>2</sup> Archives, Reports to Bishop Rosati.

<sup>3</sup> Archives, Memorandum of Van Quickenborne in regard to affairs of Father McMahan; Galena, July 16, 1833.

and circumspect Father Van Quickenborne was in his building operations will appear from the following

“Memorandum concerning the church

“The church is to be a frame building, 43 feet by 24 or 25 and 12 feet high, the sill must be mortised and tenented.

“The side sills shall receive eight posts and the spaces filled with studding two feet apart. There are to be three openings on each side to receive 24 lights each, 8 by 10. The side posts are to be braced in four places, both above and below, and those of the front and rear shall have two above and two below. The front and rear shall have four posts each. The front door to be 5 feet wide 7 feet high, with a circular sash above. In the rear there shall be two doors, 3 feet wide, each so placed as to leave in the middle a place of 8 feet free, the spaces to be filled up as above.

Twenty-two pairs of rafters shall be put up of the proper length to be of scantling 6 inches by 3, to have collar beams, then sheeting and shingling—the making of door and window frames and casings outside and inside—weather-boarding—the laying of the sleepers, but the three next to the rear should be one foot higher than the rest. A girder is to go across to make a gallery 8 feet high, 6 feet wide, and two girders more to receive the frame of a steeple.

Let a contract be entered into for the above bill, but divide it into four jobs.

The 1st to consist of the raising of the frame to the square, which will cost say.....	\$40.00
The 2nd to embrace the roof, viz., rafters, sheeting and shingling, cost of shingles added.....	82.00
The 3rd to include window frames and casings.....	25.00
The 4th will be made out of the balance, planks, walls and labor.....	95.00
	<u>\$242.00</u>

Reserve to yourself the privilege of stopping at each of these jobs, and I will be responsible for the payment of each of them; but none of them is to be commenced without my paying beforehand. Galena, 16th of July, 1833,

C. F. Van Quickenborne, S. J.”<sup>4</sup>

These desultory notes jotted down by Father Van Quickenborne will, no doubt, be of interest as giving not only the bright prospects of these early Catholic settlements, but also the difficult and sometimes sordid circumstances in which the ministers of God were constrained to live.

<sup>4</sup> Archives, Memorandum of Van Quickenborne, dated Galena, July 16, 1833.

It will be remembered that Father McMahon alluded to the presence of a French priest at Prairie du Chien who, as the rumor went, intended to stay there all winter. This was the Dominican Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, as we learn from a letter written by him to Bishop Rosati, September 29, 1832. In view of the fact that this letter, the first of a long series, Father Mazzuchelli gives a sort of critical estimate of the priests that had preceded him at Prairie du Chien, whilst it introduces a man who was destined to accomplish great things for religion on both sides of the Upper Mississippi, we will insert it here as in its proper place:

“Prairie du Chien, September 29, 1832

Right Rev. Bishop—the Rev’d. Mr. Jean-Jean, who in July last visited with Bishop Fenwick the Island of Mackinac, informed me that your Lordship had given him a letter for me, but that at his return to St. Louis, he forgot it. I should have been extremely flattered to have had such a token of my being still present to your mind. A useless servant as I am, in the vineyard of the Lord, I have nothing in my missionary labor worthy of your attention; if some good has been done in this wild and Indian portion of the Church, the Lord being the author of it, nothing remains to us, His unworthy instruments, of which we can boast. Notwithstanding, I cannot contain myself from making known to your apostolical zeal the graces which our Divine Saviour is showering down on some parts of this territory. Our Missions of Arbre Croche are in the highest state of Christian perfection, without exaggeration (which is to be abhorred by a Catholic missionary). There are about one thousand Indians who by the water of Baptism dissipated the dark clouds of idolatry, and most of them, if not nearly all have preserved unspotted the white garment of baptismal grace. My chosen flock of Mackinac is, thanks be to God, extremely edifying. The dispersed and wild sheep of the Lake Superior, who repair to Mackinac every summer, are fast improving. At the Sault Ste. Marie I hope to have a church built next spring. The Presbyterians around us, whose peculiar character was foretold by St. Paul in those words, “having an appearance of piety, but denying the power thereof”: have the first seats, and dressed in tracts and Bibles, make the first show in this world; we still remaining here, with the utmost satisfaction, “the little flock.” Green Bay, inhabited by Canadians and Metis (Half-breeds) of bad conduct, begins to flourish; drunkenness and indifference were prevalent; now an universal but gradual change its taking place. In two years, more than one hundred Indians have been well instructed and baptized. Last year, in spite of thousands of difficulties, I began the building of a Gothic church now handsomely finished, 66 feet long, 35 feet wide. I was the only priest in the Northwest Territory, till

the 1st of September last, when I arrived at Green Bay with Mr. Saenderl, the Superior of three Liguorians from Vienna, who wish to establish their Order in the United States. I omitted no exertion to convince Mr. Saenderl of the great necessity in which this new territory stands of their zeal. He is now determined on building their convent at Green Bay, where without any trouble he has a new church. I am unable to express my gladness at seeing that portion of my parish, where I labored more, and to which I was so partial, in possession of new and better pastors. On the 13th of September I left Green Bay to visit a part of the territory and see what good can be done. After eight days riding I arrived here, where last year your Lordship sent Mr. Lutz whom the people esteemed. This place has been very much neglected. Mr. Vincent Badin spent seven months here, but his limited talents and French manners were not satisfactory to most of the inhabitants, and in several instances caused our holy religion to be despised or neglected in the opinion of the public. The Prairie will become a considerable place in the new Territory; so our efforts are more demanded to make a good congregation while we can make it without opposition. To this end I am about procuring a house for next spring to answer for temporary chapel and residence for the priest. The people are well disposed to help him in his wants. Several lots are offered for the church. I will make the plan for it. It will be of stone, because cheaper and stronger than frame. Next spring, if nothing prevents me, with the permission of the bishop, I intend to come here with a Liguorian of Green Bay, and thus give a good start to the making of a new and interesting parish. The Society of Vienna promised the Liguorians all possible assistance. I said this about Prairie du Chien, because it interests your zeal, as well as that of Bishop Fenwick. On the establishment of a good and edifying congregation here it depends in great measure what the future state of religion in this Territory will be and what success and conversion of the Indians will have. These poor beings have been neglected to this day, notwithstanding their good disposition. An annual appropriation of three or four hundred dollars for the support of every priest who feels disposed to labor for the conversion of the Indians, is necessary. Priests of such vocation are, as far as I know, left to their zeal without encouragement. All the Indians of the North are willing to embrace Christianity, but nothing can be done unless the priest lives among them, which he cannot do without human means. The Liguorians say that the Society of Vienna has for its object the conversion of the Indians. This makes me rejoice in expectation of doing some good among the inhabitants on the confines of Lake Superior. As a missionary of the Northwest Territory, I have a favor to ask of your Lordship. The age and infirmity of Bishop Fenwick and his exten-

sive diocese are things well known. A bishopric in the new State of Michigan is now believed to be of absolute necessity to carry on these extensive missions. With the consent of Bishop Fenwick I have already written on this subject to Pope Gregory the XVI, with whom I am well acquainted. Were your Lordship and other bishops to recommend to his Holiness the necessity of a new diocese in Michigan and the Northwest, I have not the least doubt but we should obtain it. It is distressing for us, your missionaries, to think that only a small part of our parishes can be visited by our pastor and that we are so far from him. Many Catholics are deprived of the gift of confirmation, while their faith is at a great trial among heretics of the worst kind, who even among the natives have done and still do more for the loss of souls than we are able to do for their salvation. I have learned, with the highest degree of satisfaction, that your zeal is now occupied in the erection of a new and splendid cathedral. May the Almighty give strength and grace to your Lordship, not only to complete it, but also to sanctify it by the exercise of the holy function of your sacred and apostolic dignity.

Your humble servant,  
Samuel Mazzuchelli, O. P.

P. S.—Next week I shall leave this place to visit the Indians of Fort Winibegoe.”<sup>5</sup>

Father Mazzuchelli did not stay long at Prairie du Chien; and Galena, the religious center of the whole region, must be immediately provided with a pastor. But whom shall Bishop Rosati send? On May 16, 1834, there came to him, all unannounced, a priest whose papers showed that he was ordained in Paris, and had served in the Cura at Nevers in France, but had returned to his native Ireland and from there had sailed for America. His name was Charles Francis Fitzmaurice. The bishop gladly adopted him, and on May 19, 1834, sent him to the mission of Galena and Dubuque. He arrived at Galena on May 23. He took up the work with great hopes, as we see from his letter to Bishop Rosati dated, Galena, July 28, 1834:

“My Lord—I should have written to you before this period, were it not that I wished previously to render men and things more favorable to religion than I had found them on my arrival in this mission; an almost total desuetude in matters of religious concern originating from the want of religious instruction since the death of the Rev. Mr. McMahon, has rendered a great many indifferent, not to say forgetful, of the great work of their eternal salvation! But more of this at

---

<sup>5</sup> Mazzuchelli to Rosati, Prairie du Chien, September 29, 1832. Archives, Letters of S. Ch. Mazzuchelli.

another time. I met with some difficulties, my Lord, in the commencement in procuring a decent place for the celebration of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and also lodging for myself, but through the joint exertions of some of my flock I have succeeded in obtaining both about eight days ago. Until then my position was not very pleasant, as being obliged to lodge with a man who kept a grocery in one end of his house, and whose habits would by no means be a source of consolation to any ecclesiastic happening to be his inmate.

"I had made inquiries relative to the temporal concerns of the Rev. Mr. McMahon and was informed that a Mr. Byrne of this town and lately married by the Rev. Mr. Lutz at St. Louis, had taken out letters of administration immediately after the death of the Rev. McMahon and auctioned off all his property together with his books of every description for the purpose (it was said) of paying his debts. I have examined the chasubles (four in number) and found them in a very bad state; the chalice and paten were rolled in a clean cloth and kept in a decent place, but I could find no account of the oilstocks. They say here that the Curé of St. Charles must know something of them.

"I have alternated since my arrival, on Sundays between this town and Dubuque Mines. There are many sick cases in both places; I am consequently called on very often to attend the sick. The mortality, however, is not great in either place. We have had only one case of cholera which proved fatal.

I have, at stated periods, called meetings of the congregation in order to devise some means suitable for the building of a Catholic church in this town, and could not until lately effect anything like unanimity among them. About eight days ago I had convened the last meeting, when they came to the resolution of getting a church of stone built as soon as possible, and to make a beginning, seven or eight of the most respectable Catholics of this town have subscribed their names each for \$100, so that there is every appearance of things getting on well at present.

"As there are a great many French in this congregation, I give instructions in English at Mass, and in French at Vespers, every Sunday that I say Mass in town. A great many of other religious denominations assist at Mass and act with the greatest decorum. Two adults have embraced the Catholic faith since my arrival in this region, the one a certain Walker, who departed this life a few days after being received into the bosom of the Church, the other a lady who was never baptized, although she lived with a Catholic man.

"The Catholic inhabitants of Dubuque Mines have subscribed to the amount of \$1100 for the purpose of getting a Catholic church built,

in consequence of which I have made application to the agent and obtained a lot of land in your Lordship's name for that purpose. We have already bought the lumber, let out the contract to a carpenter, and expect to have it finished before All Saints Day, as they are far more active and zealous there on this occasion than at Galena.

"My Lord, I hope your cathedral will very soon be completed, that you may enjoy good health, as also the Rev. Mr. Jean-Jean, Borgna and Lutz, to whom I here present my most humble respects. They are together, but alas! I am alone. Still God's protection extends to us all. My sister's health was not very good since she came here, having labored under a very severe bilious attack, but is at present getting better.

With ardent prayers for the preservation of your Lordship's health, I have the honor to remain, My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient and humble servant,

C. J. Fitzmaurice, Pt."<sup>6</sup>

Alas, for the uncertainty of human affairs, Father Fitzmaurice died in the spring of the year 1835, some say of the cholera; others, of the yellow fever; the second Galena priest to die within a twelvemonth after his appointment. It was a sad blow to the struggling parishes, but the sacrifice was not in vain. For, as Father Mazzuchelli writes in 1837: "In the year 1835 a lot was secured at Galena for the church, of which the first stone was laid on the 12th of August in the same year. The church of Galena is dedicated to St. Michael, measures 70 feet by 39 feet. It is all of stone and is now built ten feet above the ground; nearly all the wooden materials are purchased. The parish of Galena numbers about five hundred Catholics."<sup>7</sup>

The lot spoken of in the report of Father Mazzuchelli was bought from Patrick Gray, July 19, 1833, for 200 dollars, paid out of the subscriptions. The lot was "Bounded on the east by the road leading to Meeker's Farm, on the north by Martin Gray's claim, on the west by the burial ground, on the south by the public lands and contained about five acres. It was deeded to Bishop Rosati."

The earthly remains of Father Fitzmaurice were buried in the new Catholic Cemetery and with them the remains of Father McMahon, which were disinterred from the public cemetery of Galena.

---

<sup>6</sup> Fitzmaurice to Rosati, in Archives.

<sup>7</sup> Mazzuchelli to Rosati, in Archives.

## FATHER SAINT CYR AND THE CHURCH IN CHICAGO

One month after Father Benedict Roux's designation for Kansas City, the westernmost station of the diocese of St. Louis, his friend and fellow-student, John M. I. Saint Cyr received the appointment to its easternmost mission, the town of Chicago on Lake Michigan. Even prior to this date, April 17th, 1833, there existed some kind of a spiritual bond between the Metropolis of the Great Lakes in its infancy and the Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley in its early prime. Father Francis Pinet S. J. the Founder of the Angel Guardian Mission on the site of Chicago, became the co-founder of the Mission of St. Francis Xavier on the site of St. Louis. Prior to 1805 there were at least five French Catholic families settled at Chicago, those of Antoine Ouilmette, Louis Pettel, Francois Le Mai, Jean B. Pointe de Saible and Jean B. Peltier, three of whom, Peltier, Le Mai and Pointe de Saible, had their children baptized in St. Louis by the Recollet Father Lusson, in October 1799.<sup>1</sup> At the establishment of Fort Dearborn in 1803, and its reestablishment after the massacre of 1813, Chicago began to take on the form of a permanent settlement.

In 1815 the number of French Catholics at Chicago had increased to such an extent that they attracted the attention of Bishop Flaget, who wrote as follows to the Holy See: "I heard during my excursion that in the very midst of the Indians were four French Congregations belonging to my diocese: one on the Upper Mississippi (Galena), another in a place usually designated Chicagou, still another on the shores of Lake Michigan (probably Green Bay) and a fourth toward the source of the Illinois River (Peoria); but lack of time and the prevalence of war have prevented me from visiting them."<sup>2</sup>

In September 1821, the little Catholic Congregation at Chicago received a visit from Father Gabriel Richard, who said Mass in the house of a Canadian, probably Jean B. Beaubien, and in the afternoon preached to the garrison of Fort Dearborn. Father Richard had come at the invitation of a Pottawatomie Chief to be present at the treaty which the Indian tribes were to make at Chicago with the United States Government. But contrary winds had detained the visitor so long that the treaty was concluded before he arrived. In October 1830, the proto-priest of the United States,<sup>3</sup> Father Stephan Theodore Badin,

1 "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 19.

2 "Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 305.

3 Proto-priest; the first native-born priest of the United States.

paid the place a brief visit from the Potawatomi Mission of St. Joseph's. It was Chief Pokegan that carried Father Badin's chapel equipments to Fort Dearborn.

At the close of 1833, Chicago found itself a legally organized town. Consequently it must have had a population of at least 150. About ninety per cent of these inhabitants were Catholics, among them the two half-breed Potawatomi Chiefs, Billy Caldwell and Alexander Robinson. Two converts from Episcopalianism, Anson and Augustine Deodat Taylor, were leaders in the movement to obtain a priest for the rising town.<sup>4</sup> A petition was sent to Bishop Rosati of St. Louis bearing date of April 16th, 1833:

"We, the Catholics of Chicago, Cook Co., Ill., lay before you the necessity there exists to have a pastor in the new flourishing city. There are here several families of French descent, born and brought up in the Roman Catholic Faith, and others quite willing to aid us in supporting a pastor, who ought to be sent here before other sects obtain the upper hand, which very likely they will try to do. We have heard several persons say, were there a priest here, they would join our religion in preference to any other. We count almost one hundred Catholics in this town. We will not cease to pray until you have taken our important request in consideration."<sup>5</sup>

Bishop Rosati assured the delegation that had presented the petition that the wish of the Chicago Catholics would be gratified at once. Though the place was not within the limits of his diocese, he held the powers of Vicar-General from Bishop Flaget, and would act as such, as he notified the Bishop of Bardstown on April 17th:

"Having received a petition of the Catholics of Chicago, who regarded me as their diocesan bishop and demanded of me a priest, showing the dangers of losing a concession of two thousand acres of land which the chiefs of the Potawatomi, with the consent of the government, have made to the Catholic Church, by virtue of the powers of Vicar-General, which you have given me, I will send Mr. Saint Cyr, but on condition that, until the limits of the diocese are fixed I can recall him."<sup>6</sup> On the same day Bishop Rosati wrote to Father Saint Cyr, then at the Barrens:

"By virtue of the powers of Vicar-General to me granted by the most illustrious and most Reverend Bishop of Bardstown (Ky), I depute you to the mission of Chicago and the adjoining regions within the State of Illinois. . . ."<sup>7</sup>

4 Cf. Garraghan, G. J., "The Catholic Church in Chicago," pp. 39 and 40, *passim*.

5 Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese, cf. Andreas, "History of Chicago," vol. I, p. 289.

6 Rosati's Letterbook, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

7 Rosati's Letterbook, IX, in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

On April 20th, 1833, the *Shepherd of the Valley* announced the departure of Father Saint Cyr for his first missionary field in Northeastern Illinois. Father John Mary Irenaeus Saint Cyr was born in the Parish of Quincie near Lyons, France, on November 2nd, 1803. He made his clerical studies at Lyons, and received tonsure, Minor Orders and subdeaconship at the hands of Archbishop John Paul Gaston De Pins, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Lyons and Vienna. In the beginning of June, 1831, the young cleric, through the kindness of the newly founded Association of the Propagation of the Faith, was sent to the Louisiana Missions, and arrived in St. Louis in August of the same year. He continued his theological studies at the Seminary of St. Mary's under Father Tornatore, where he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Rosati, April 6th, 1833. The journey across the prairies, made partly on foot, in company with Anson Taylor, lasted twelve days. The day of arrival at their destination was May 1st, 1833.<sup>8</sup>

Father Saint Cyr was received with every mark of kindness by the people of Chicago. He was welcomed as a permanent guest at the Sanganash Hotel, conducted by Mark Beaubien. A temporary chapel was prepared by the same gentleman in a log house just across from the hotel. But, everything being so very primitive, the good Father deeply felt the pinch of poverty.

"If I have delayed so long to send you news," he writes to Bishop Rosati about a month after his arrival, "you may be sure that this is not owing to negligence or, much less, to any lack of good will on my part. The fact is that as I have no acquaintance as yet with the people of Chicago and do not know how they stand as to the establishment of religion in their town, I have wished to sound them a little to the end that I may be less uncertain as to what to say to you about conditions here in the matter of religion . . . While the number of Catholics is large, almost all of them are entirely without knowledge of the duties of religion. Still, the regularity with which they are present at Mass every Sunday and the attention and respect with which they assist thereat, give reason to hope that, with patience and some Sunday instructions, we shall be able, with God's help, to organize a congregation of good Catholics. Many Protestants, even of the most distinguished of Chicago, appear to be much in favor of the Catholic religion, in particular Mr. Owen, the Indian agent, as also the doctor and several other respectable families who come to Mass every Sunday and assist at it with much respect."<sup>9</sup>

In a financial way some advance has been made as Father Saint Cyr writes: "The people of Chicago have taken up a subscription amount-

---

<sup>8</sup> Biographical notes in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>9</sup> Saint Cyr to Rosati, June 4, 1833, in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

ing to 261 dollars, and they hope to go even somewhat beyond that. Mr. (Jean) Baptiste Beubien gives the site on which to build the church. However, despite all the fair prospects held out in every way by this town of Chicago, despite the fine promises made to provide the priest with everything necessary for his support, despite all the honor and courtesy and marks of respect which they continue to show me daily to the chagrin of the Protestant ministers, I should have reason to complain, Monseigneur, were you not to send me some assistance at the start to relieve my needs; for I should not have money enough even to pay postage on a letter were I to receive one, nor do I know how I am going to pay the transportation charges on my trunk, when it comes, unless I have some help from you beforehand. I cannot say Mass every day, as I should like to, for I cannot always obtain the wine and candles. I am eager to go to St. Joseph, as soon as (Rev.) Mr. Badin shall have returned from Kentucky, but, it is true, as you will tell me, that the Catholics have promised to furnish everything necessary for the support of the priest. Yes, Monseigneur, but they are going to start to build a little chapel and apresbytery with money contributed by them for the purpose. Therefore, if the money contributed falls short of the cost of the buildings I shall be constantly in want." Yet, amid all the troubles and restraints of his position Father Saint Cyr is comforted by the thought of future great spiritual conquests.

"The eagerness shown by the people of Chicago, the Protestants even, to have a Catholic church, allows us to place great hopes in the future. Every Sunday so far, I have given an instruction alternately in English and French. I am particularly anxious to remove prejudices by showing as clearly as possible in what the teaching of the church consists. In my first instruction I explained the meaning of the invocation of the saints, the difference there is between praying to God and the praying to the saints, the meaning of the veneration paid to images and the doctrine of the Catholic church regarding Purgatory. The second Sunday I preached in English on the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ. I showed its necessity, bringing out also how this unity is found in the Catholic Church. On Ascension day, I preached in French on the Real Presence and afterwards explained in English the ceremonies of the Mass. Pentecost-day, I set forth the rapid progress of the gospel throughout the world and the great results it accomplished in reforming morals (this in English). On Trinity day, I explained in French the symbol of St. Ambrose on the Holy Trinity and then the Apostles' Creed, as also what we must absolutely know and believe to be saved. I tell you all this, Monseigneur, not to show you what I have done, but that you may see whether what I have done is right or wrong and that I may learn how to proceed in the future. A number of persons have approached the tribunal of penance. I presume

Monseigneur, that you put some books in my trunk, as you gave me to understand at my departure. Up to the present I have been left to my own resources. I should like exceedingly to have some instructions in English, French, some French catechisms and two or three mission hymns.

"To give you some idea of Chicago, I will tell you that since my arrival more than twenty houses have been built, while materials for new ones may be seen coming in on all sides. The situation of Chicago is the finest I have ever seen. Work is now proceeding on a harbor which will enable lake-vessels to enter the town. Three arrived lately crowded with passengers who came to visit these parts and, in most cases to settle down here. Everything proclaims that Chicago will one day become a great town and one of commercial importance."<sup>10</sup>

It is remarkable how this simple priest divines the coming greatness and importance of this struggling poverty-stricken village. His estimate made under most adverse circumstances, came as near to the full truth as that of anyone else, capable of making an estimate.

At the end of June 1833, Father Saint Cyr at last received his trunk, with a number of necessary things, among them a Missal. In order to pay for its transportation he was obliged to get a loan of two dollars and a half from Mr. Beaubien, for which kindness he is duly grateful.

"I am well aware," writes Father Saint Cyr to his Bishop, "that the people should provide for all my needs; they have promised to do so. If I can have from them the wherewithal to build a little chapel, I shall consider myself very fortunate, and I hope that, with the grace of God and the assistance of charitable souls, our Divine Saviour will have a temple in Chicago, where he will dwell continually in the midst of us by his Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

"Our Subscription for the church amounts now to 332 dollars; but, according to the building plans agreed on, we shall need five hundred dollars. It will be thirty-six feet long, 24 wide, and 12 high. As to the land which the Indian chiefs are reported to have promised, we cannot count on it, seeing that (Rev.) Mr. Badin, to whom the Indians made the promise, did not fulfil the conditions of the contract in virtue of which the Indians offered to give a certain amount of land towards the building of a Catholic Church, for their own use, however.

"Another thing which causes me much pain: I cannot say Mass during the week, or rarely so, for lack of the necessary articles, mass-wine and candles. But, Monseigneur, I must tell you in all sincerity that this mission holds out the fairest hopes for the future, and that to abandon it for the lack of some little assistance, or some small sacrifices, would be a great loss for religion, a loss all the greater and the

---

<sup>10</sup> From the letter of June 4, 1833.

more certain now that a Presbyterian minister arrived in Chicago from some other place a few days ago. Many Protestants, even of the most respectable families of Chicago, would return to their first religion, or rather, would remain in their errors, as being without any means of embracing the Catholic religion.”<sup>11</sup>

“I have performed eight baptisms in Chicago and must go to the Fox River to perform some more.

“You cannot imagine, Monseigneur, how much good could be done for religion in these vast prairies, were a priest to visit, from time to time, the families who are scattered here and there, abandoned to themselves in everything that concerns their eternal salvation. “Even the Indians, the poor Indians, are not indifferent towards our holy faith; they earnestly wish to have a black-robe, I have made the acquaintance of three of the principal chiefs, all three Catholics. Two of them in particular, who remained some days in Chicago, edified me by their great faith. Before sitting down at table, whether others were present or not, they prayed for a space of almost five minutes, and three times every day they came to my room to say their prayers which consisted of a Pater and an Ave, to thank God for having given them life and the means to support life and to pray for their benefactors. I showed them a large crucifix, and explained to them with the aid of an interpreter what our Lord had done and suffered for us to save us from hell and give us heaven. They remained motionless for a while, with their eyes fixed on the crucifix, and looking at it with an air of piety and compassion, which showed they had a lively realization of what they saw. Then they broke the silence by prayers which they recited at the foot of the crucifix, shedding, at the same time, torrents of tears. *Non vidi tantam fidem in Israel*. I could not refrain from weeping with them. They told us that they prayed to God three times every day, whether journeying or at home, and that they spent every Sunday singing praises of Him who died for the whites and poor Indians alike. What a beautiful harvest, Monseigneur.”<sup>12</sup>

The close of September 1833, brought stirring events to the rude frontier-town. The Potawatomi Indians, or as they were officially styled, “the United Nation of the Chippewas, Ottawas and Potawatomi,” together with a number of other Indians assembled at Chicago under the protection of Fort Dearborn to conclude a treaty with the United States commissioners for the purpose of selling to the Government their lands in Michigan, Indiana and Illinois. The treaty stipulated that the land should be relinquished for a consideration of one dollar per acre, and a grant of five million acres of land

<sup>11</sup> Saint Cyr to Rosati, June 1833.

<sup>12</sup> From the same letter.

on the left bank of the Missouri River. The Indians agreed to leave for their new homes immediately after the ratification of the treaty. Father Saint Cyr held divine service repeatedly for the assembled Catholic Indians.<sup>13</sup> "More than 1000 Indians are gathered here for the payment. Yesterday, September 15th, I said Holy Mass four miles from Chicago before a large congregation of converted Indians recommended to me by their pastor (Rev.) Mr. Deseille, who could not accompany them to the treaty, as he is the only priest at St. Joseph. Their modesty, their good behavior during the most Holy Sacrifice and their respect for priests touched and edified me exceedingly. The Catholics of Chicago, together with those from St. Joseph who came to attend the treaty, gathered there in great numbers to hear Mass. The Catholics sang French hymns at the beginning of Mass. Then the Indians sang the Credo in their own language but to the same air to which we sang it, and they sang besides, a number of beautiful hymns."<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile Bishop Rosati had sent a request to the Indian agent, Robert Stuart to pay Father Saint Cyr the sum of fifty dollars, to supply his present wants. As to the lands which the Indian chiefs had promised to give towards the support of religion, nothing seems to have been done.

With renewed energy Father Saint Cyr pursued his laborious course. As to the progress recently made he has this to say in his letter of September 16th: "The carpenters are working at present on my little chapel. I hope it will be finished by Sunday or at least during the course of the following week . . . "Monseigneur Rezé spent a little while here on his return from Green Bay. He gave me ten dollars for my church and ten dollars for myself. His visit was extremely short, as the steamboat left the same day it arrived."<sup>15</sup>

The chapel was now nearing completion. The lumber had been brought from St. Joseph's across the lake. Mr. Augustine Deodat Taylor had the contract. Hardly had he finished his work, when the Indians came to clean up the place to make it fit for divine worship. Father Saint Cyr said the first Mass in the new Church in October 1833, for the Catholic Potawatomi from South Bend, about 300 in number who had come to Chicago for their annuities. But the walls and ceiling of the new edifice were still unplastered, the outside walls unpainted: the inside but poorly furnished with rough benches for pews and the simplest of tables for altar and pulpit. There was no steeple nor bell. The total cost was \$400, and the funds collected were

---

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Garraghan, *op. cit.*, pp. 56 and 57. For text of Treaty, see Kappler, "Indian Affairs and Treaties," vol. II, p. 402.

<sup>14</sup> Saint Cyr to Rosati, September 16, 1833, Archives.

<sup>15</sup> *Idem*, *ibidem*.

exhausted, and the willingness to give was gone: so Father Saint Cyr determined to do what many a priest before him had done, to go through northern Illinois and to St. Louis on a so-called collecting tour. The troubled soul of Father Saint Cyr did not think of asking his Bishop's permission, but simply presumed it could not be refused. On November 23rd, he informs Bishop Rosati of his plan and the reason for adopting it:

"For over a month my little chapel has been finished in a manner decent enough to enable us to say Mass without inconvenience every Sunday and week day up to the present. But the cold which is now beginning to make itself felt more keenly over these vast prairies makes the chapel almost uninhabitable, for it is still unplastered. The impossibility of saying Mass in it during the winter, as also the impossibility of having it plastered owing to the slender means at present at our disposal, make it necessary for me to go down to St. Louis to do a little begging. Thus, together with what the people here have promised still to give, (though I scarce put any trust in their pledges), I shall have quite a pleasant chapel, small though it be. Another motive which induces me to make a trip to St. Louis is that Thursday next we are going to open a school in which three languages, French, English and Latin will be taught. Mr. Kimber who is 40 years old will be in charge; he is a good singer and speaks English, French, and Latin very well; but as we cannot find here the books needed by the children, I will take advantage of the journey to secure them."<sup>16</sup>

As a kind of *captatio benevolentiae* the self-sacrificing pastor adds: "Up to the present, we have had Mass and Vespers sung every Sunday with all the solemnity possible under the circumstances. People enter into these services with great earnestness. I have hopes that, with the grace of God and the charity of the faithful and in spite of all difficulties and miseries it will be possible to organize a congregation of good Catholics here in Chicago."<sup>17</sup>

What success Father Saint Cyr had in St. Louis we have no way of learning: but that the time he spent on his journey to and fro was not wasted, is shown by the letter he wrote to Bishop Rosati, on June 11th, 1834: "I arrived in Chicago, the fifth of this month, (June 1834) to the great astonishment of the people, who thought I was never going to return. They were pleased to see me again. Last Sunday we had High Mass, the church being full of people despite the bad weather, and in the afternoon we sang Vespers. A great many Americans assisted at the services.

"I cannot give you the population of Chicago exactly. The common opinion is that there are 2000 inhabitants in town, and every

16 Saint Cyr to Rosati, November 23, 1833, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

17 Idem, *ibidem*.

day you may see vessels and steamboats put in here from the lake crowded with families who come to settle in Chicago, *Surgunt Moenia Trojae*.”<sup>18</sup>

“In the course of my journey I saw or visited nearly all the Catholics of Illinois, I performed thirteen baptisms and four marriages and gave the Catholics of Sugar Creek, Bear Creek, and South Fork and Springfield an opportunity to make their Easter duties. Eighteen miles above Peoria I found several Catholic families who so far have not been visited. I could not stop there, but I promised to visit them when I should return from Chicago.”<sup>19</sup>

Bishop Rosati, at this time, seems to have been thinking of withdrawing Father Saint Cyr from Chicago, and placing it under the care of Father Fitzmaurice of Galena, as an out-mission. The Catholics of Chicago, however full of high hopes as beseeemed Chicago people, were anxious to know when a Bishop would be appointed for their district.

“They would like to have him in Chicago,” wrote Father Saint Cyr. The good pastor of Chicago, on his part, was very glad to hear, that he was dispensed from visiting Galena, as he had abundance of work within the section of about one hundred and fifty miles to the west and south. Bishop Rosati knew that there were many Catholic families scattered throughout the country between St. Louis and Chicago. Father Van Quickenborne had preceded Father Saint Cyr in his ministry to the Catholic immigrants along the Illinois River and its southern tributaries, especially in Sangamon County. He had imparted the information he had gathered to Bishop Rosati, who now, in turn, conveyed it to Father Saint Cyr, with the request that he visit the scattered sheep of the flock. Father Saint Cyr answered:

“As to the Catholics, whom you tell me about in your letter, Monseigneur, I am acquainted with them, have met them, and know where they live. Despite all this, I cannot visit them so long as I remain in Chicago, in view of the fact that they are 150 miles from where I am stationed and that I cannot meet the expenses, I am obliged to make in running from place to place. What is more, my health would allow it less at the present time than ever.

“As to the most centrally located place from which to visit all the Catholics of Illinois, it is my opinion, Springfield, 100 miles from St. Louis and a little over 200 miles from Chicago. Here is the place I should pick out for head-quarters, as being the most suitable for the purpose. But you see, at the same time that I cannot visit the Catholics of Illinois on account of the great distance intervening between the settlements and the difficulties to be met in travelling over the prairies. Hence, either Chicago or the Catholics of Illinois are to be

<sup>18</sup> Saint Cyr to Rosati, June 11, 1834, Archives.

<sup>19</sup> Saint Cyr to Rosati, June 11, 1834.

neglected, or else some other measure must be taken. Now, Monseigneur, it is for you to decide as you judge best. Only this: whether you judge it proper that I remain in Chicago or leave it, kindly let me know as soon as possible, because if I am to remain here at least some time longer, the people are prepared to enlarge the church by 24 feet and build a presbytery. It would disappoint and even discourage them, were we now to abandon them after having put them to such expense."<sup>20</sup>

The winter of 1834-1835 was considered a mild one, and, in the estimation of the Canadians inured to cold "no winter at all:" yet the slight frame of Father Saint Cyr felt it keenly.

"*Labor improbus omnia vincit*," he writes "Our little chapel is finished at last, but not without many difficulties and annoyances occasioned by the mild winter of the Canadians. We have been obliged to keep up a fire constantly day and night to prevent the plastering from freezing and this for more than three weeks. Only at the end of this time were we able to say Mass, but since then we have had Mass and Vespers sung every Sunday, sometimes to music, though this is not always harmonious. However, they do not fail to make a noise, and this is what is looked for here. But it must be observed that, if there is discord in our music, it is owing not precisely to any fault or bad will on the part of the musicians, but to our want of instruments.

"I will also state that though I speak English very poorly, the Americans do not fail to come in crowds to our church every Sunday, and if it is finished, it is partly to their generosity, that I owe it."<sup>21</sup>

It was towards the end of 1835, that the Potawatomi band of Indians made their exodus from their old hunting grounds to the far west. Before their departure they gave the citizens of Chicago one last exhibition of their wild prowess, though a bloodless one. Almost naked, their bodies painted, uttering fierce war-whoops and dancing savagely they paraded along Lake Street and thence to the North Side, whilst the pale-faces looked on from their places of vantage, with mingled feelings of fascination and alarm. The march for the west started in September: it took a southwesterly direction through Illinois and Iowa.

A number of Father Saint Cyr's parishioners the Laframboises, Ouilmettes and Chevaliers, being half-breeds, were thus lost to the Church of Chicago, we shall meet them again in their new homes at Council Bluffs under the care of Jesuit Fathers.

In 1834 the see of Vincennes was erected with Bishop Simon Bruté as its first incumbent.<sup>22</sup> The new diocese included the state of

<sup>20</sup> Saint Cyr to Rosati, July 2, 1834.

<sup>21</sup> Saint Cyr to Rosati, January 12, 1835.

<sup>22</sup> The Bull of 1832, "*Maximas Inter*," of Pope Gregory XVI, made Bishop Rosati's jurisdiction over the western half of Illinois final and complete. Kaskaskia, Cahokia and Prairie du Rocher became part and parcel of the Diocese of St. Louis. But Chicago was now under the diocese of Vincennes.

Indiana and the eastern part of the state of Illinois, the western part having been definitely placed under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of St. Louis. Chicago was now in the diocese of Vincennes, and the question arose, shall Father Cyr, its founder and pastor become a member of Bishop Bruté's clergy. Neither Bishop Rosati nor Father Saint Cyr would acquiesce. At Bishop Bruté's consecration in the new St. Louis Cathedral, October 28th, 1834, it was arranged that Father Saint Cyr should remain one year longer in Chicago, and then return to St. Louis. As Father Saint Cyr was not fully informed on the matter, and as Bishop Bruté seemed to be under the impression that Father Saint Cyr was definitely attached to his diocese, Bishop Rosati was requested to give his decision: Father Saint Cyr was still a member of St. Louis diocese and would be recalled on Bishop Bruté's return from France. Towards the end of 1835, Father Saint Cyr renewed his request to be recalled:

"I have learned that Monseigneur Bruté has at length arrived at Vincennes with a large number of priests. I hope he will find some one among them to replace me. Kindly call Monseigneur Bruté's attention to the matter and recall me to your diocese. This is my only desire. However, should you think Divine Providence has other designs in view, see and judge for yourself. I leave everything to your good pleasure, and am ready to submit to it most willing, in the firm conviction that *nihil mihi deerit in loco ubi me collocavit.*"<sup>23</sup>

Another year was to pass by for Father Saint Cyr in Chicago. But in September 1836, Father Bernard Schaeffer, a native of Strassburg, was sent by Bishop Bruté to take charge of the German Catholics of the city. Father Schaeffer was an excellent priest, but a poor English scholar. Among the Germans he was well liked, but among the French, Irish and American Catholics he was respected as a priest but disliked as the prospective pastor. Father Saint Cyr was about to depart at the call of his Bishop.

It was on March 4th, 1837, four years after his first arrival in Chicago, that he wrote to Bishop Rosati: "I received your letter of February 23rd, today, I hasten to answer it and in order to let you know that I shall do everything in my power to follow out your orders despite great difficulties in the way. If I cannot go on to St. Louis before Holy Week as you desire me to do, it will not be through any lack of good will on my part, but because circumstances will not allow it. "It is with considerable pain, Monseigneur, that I see myself forced to sell a portion of my books to pay part of my traveling expenses,

---

<sup>23</sup> Saint Cyr to Rosati, September 5, 1836, Archives.

and even so, I shall be obliged to borrow money, but from whom I do not know.

“When I went to Vincennes, I did everything in my power to get a chalice and a missal for (Rev.) Mr. Schaeffer. But all my efforts were in vain, so that you will not take it amiss, Monseigneur, if I leave the chalice and missal with (Rev.) Mr. Schaeffer. He will return them as soon as he can procure others in their place. Sacrifice on sacrifice.”<sup>24</sup>

It would seem strange that the rising town of Chicago should be very anxious to retain the services of Father Saint Cyr, and so very derelict in giving a proper support for his person: yet so it was. If it had been different, the following petition to the Right Reverend Bishop Rosati, of St. Louis might have elicited a more favorable answer:

“The undersigned Roman Catholic inhabitants of the town of Chicago have heard with the deepest regret, that you have recalled the Rev. Mr. Saint Cyr from this mission and, as such an event would, in their opinion, be productive of injurious consequences to the cause of Catholic truth in this place, they humbly beg leave to call your attention to the actual situation of our people in this mission and request that you will carefully consider all the circumstances previous to such removal.

They would in the first place inform your Grace, that the Rev. Mr. Saint Cyr, by his exemplary conduct, great zeal in the cause of religion and incessant perseverance, has endeared himself to every member of our congregation and is highly esteemed by the members of other denominations, and having acquired a sufficient knowledge of the English language to enable him to preach and instruct with fluency and elegance, they conceive that his removal would be a subject of bereavement of the whole congregation.

That his associate Rev. Mr. Schaeffer, although equally distinguished for piety and zeal has but an imperfect knowledge of the English language and is consequently unfitted for discharging the spiritual duties of a pastor among an English population.

That we have in this town two thousand and perhaps more Catholics, as there are a large number of Catholic families in the adjacent country, particularly on the line of the Chicago and Illinois canal, the great body of laborers on which are Catholics, to all of whom the clergy here must render spiritual assistance. The attention, therefore, of a clergyman speaking the English language will be indispensably necessary and they would humbly represent, that nothing but the most urgent necessity should induce the removal of a man from such a vast field of labor who is so beloved and revered by his congregation.

That as our church is totally inadequate to contain the fourth part of the attending congregation, we have taken the preliminary steps

---

<sup>24</sup> Saint Cyr to Rosati, Archives.

to erect a new chapel capable of accomodating our large and increasing society. The removal of the Rev. Mr. Saint Cyr will operate to retard and delay the work so much desired, not only by Catholics but by various members of other denominations. That as this is the most important place in the state, as the population is so rapidly increasing, that we can in a few years justly expect a Catholic population of several thousand, and as one clergyman cannot possibly discharge the duties annexed to it, good policy as well as duty require, that we should have clergymen stationed here capable, by their example of inspiring respect, by their talents of dissipating ignorance and prejudice and by their zeal and perseverance of building up in this new region the imperishable monuments of our holy religion.

We therefore humbly entreat your Grace not to deprive us of a dearly beloved pastor at the commencement of his usefulness, but to leave him where his zeal and virtues are so well appreciated and so likely to respond to the best interests to the Church.<sup>25</sup>

What Bishop Rosati answered his petitioners does not appear: but Father Saint Cyr left Chicago for St. Louis in the latter part of March 1837, and in June was appointed to the mission of Quincy, Illinois, and the neighboring counties.

Father Schaeffer, thus left alone in Chicago, struggled on until the end of June, when Father Bernard O'Meara came to assist him in his last illness, of which he died on the Feast of the Guardian Angel, October 2nd, 1837, Father O'Meara became his successor as pastor of St. Marys.

In August 1838, Bishop Bruté made his first episcopal visitation of the Church of Chicago. With Father Saint Cyr's departure the golden link between St. Louis and the Church of Chicago, was broken. The small mustard seed grew and gathered strength, and in 1844 became the episcopal see of all Illinois, then an arch-diocese and now the home of one of the Princes of the Church Universal. It is Father Saint Cyr's distinction that he planted in tears where others now reap in joy.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese, Petitions.

<sup>26</sup> There is nothing better written on the early days of the Church in Chicago than the Rev. Father Garraghan's book, quoted above. It contains every letter and every scrap of information on Father Saint Cyr available at this time.

## PETER PAUL LEFEVERE OF SALT RIVER

We have seen in a former chapter, how the Jesuit Fathers from their Florissant Novitiate penetrated into the wilds of Northeastern Missouri, that were then just opening to Catholic immigration, and how they groped their way from farm house to farm house to seek the scattered sheep of the fold of Christ and to break to them the bread of life. But a priest was needed who should devote all his time and energy to consolidate the scattered membership into regular missions and parishes. The hero of this religious movement was the man of untiring zeal and energy, Father Peter Paul Lefevere, the future Bishop of Zela and Administrator of Detroit.

Nominally pastor of St. Paul's on Salt River in Ralls County, Missouri, Father Lefevere extended his influence far and wide, in Missouri, Illinois and Iowa. With the deep lively faith of St. Peter, Father Lefevere combined the courage and straightforwardness of St. Paul, which led him, at least on one occasion, to resist his beloved bishop and tell him to his face what he thought of his "extravagance." But no harm was done, no ill-will produced, and Bishop Rosati continued to hold the great and good man in the highest esteem.

Peter Paul Lefevere was born in Roulers, in the diocese of Bruges, April 30th, 1804. After a classical course in his Belgian home, he studied theology at Paris and, coming to Missouri, was ordained by Bishop Rosati at St. Mary's of the Barrens, November 20th, 1831. On the 27th of April 1832, the Bishop appointed the Rev. Victor Paillason pastor of New Madrid and of all the surrounding country, with faculties in Kentucky and Tennessee, and gave him as his assistant Rev. Peter Paul Lefevere. It was the intention of the authorities to found a school of higher education in New Madrid. The erection of a proper building was immediately begun. Great hopes were entertained in regard to the project, especially by the people of New Madrid, but it all met with sudden disaster. A fire of unknown origin laid low all the cherished hopes of the young priest.

In a very touching letter of June 24th, 1832, he opened his heart to his Father and friend, Bishop Rosati, and asked to be assigned to some place where by means of a frugal sustenance, he could work with more fruit for the salvation of others and that of himself, which he declared was the only motive that brought him to America.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lefevere to Rosati, June 24, 1832. Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

Bishop Rosati's answer of the 18th of July 1832, announces to Father Lefevere his appointment to the mission of Salt River, but the 2nd day of August the Bishop suspends this order, saying that, as Father Paillason was sent on a special mission to Arkansas, he should remain at New Madrid until the pastor's return. Father Lefevere might also join Father Beauprez in the Arkansas mission. Father Lefevere left the choice of his future field to his Superior, as was proper, and explained the reasons for his reluctance to accept the Arkansas mission: "I greatly apprehend to have no better success than M. Saulnier, who is an old and experienced missionary, and my apprehension has also been increased by the dreadful portrait men of good information here have drawn of the immorality and all the vices of the inhabitants of Arkansas . . . . As for the rest, I resign and conform myself entirely to your will, because this is a duty incumbent on me, and I am confident that you act and ever will act as a father in my regard. I am much embarrassed and in a state of dejection. When I left the Seminary I was without money and had but a scanty provision of clothes, which are now almost worn out by continual work at the establishment, and since my arrival here I have not yet received so much as one cent. So that for want of means I could not stay long in this place, and I am also unable to pay the passage to the place you would send me . . . It would be a great favor to me and a great relief, if you would pay my passage, and send me something, either by intentions or otherwise, to place myself in a somewhat better condition than I am at present."<sup>2</sup>

This plaintive though not unmanly, letter brought the decision which determined Father Lefevere's future life. It is the brief order of August 29th: "In the letter which will be brought to you by Mr. Larochia you will find a banknote to pay your passage from New Madrid to St. Louis, from where you will go to Salt River." And to Salt River Father Lefevere went, December 3rd, to do valiant battle in the cause of Holy Church, until his appointment as Bishop of Zela, and Coadjutor and Administrator of Detroit, November 22, 1841, almost eight years of ceaseless trouble and toil.

Concerning this period of Father Lefevere's activities we have a beautiful monument in the letters he wrote from time to time to Bishop Rosati, letters that owe more to the grace of Christ that animated the writer, than to the graces of the English language. Yet, the English is clear and always to the point; and the matter these letters embody, is a most important contribution to the history of the beginnings of the Church in northeastern Missouri and Iowa and the adjoining parts of

---

<sup>2</sup> Lefevere to Rosati, August 17, 1832. Archives of the St. Louis Archdiocese.

Illinois and Wisconsin. In their native ruggedness they form the best illustration of Father Lefevere's character, as well as of the extent and difficult nature of his missionary labors.

Arriving in St. Louis from New Madrid the young missionary called on Father Van Quickenborne, but found him rather taciturn<sup>3</sup> in regard to the dispositions he had made at Salt River. Bishop Rosati was at the Seminary and could not be consulted: No one else seemed to know anything about Northern Missouri. Father Lefevere felt greatly discouraged and downhearted: As he was without means, he gladly accepted the offer of twenty-five dollars made by Father Lutz and requested the Bishop to repay the loan. On January 23rd, 1833 he writes from Salt River to Bishop Rosati:

“As for what regards the religion here, I have every reason to feel satisfied, seeing the fervor and the zeal of a great many of these Catholics; and if I may judge by what I have already seen, the congregation in general is well disposed and feels deeply interested in having a stationary clergyman among them. But they are widely scattered. I have held church already in two different homes and promised to hold it next time in another place: and I think it will be necessary to go, from time to time, to two other homes. This is somewhat embarrassing to me: for it seems there is a kind of emulation among the people to have Mass said on Sundays at their house. On this side of the river (Salt River) they seem to desire that the priest should stay among them and spend the greater part of his time in their congregation, because they are more numerous and have built a church, which is already far advanced; on the other side they show great disposition to build a church, and therefore seem to desire that the priest should go often amongst them. As for me, I board with Mr. Raphy Leake, who receives me with all possible kindness and affection; and so does his lady and all his family towards me. But he has many children, and his house is not over-large, and therefore I think he does more than he is able. You know that this must be inconvenient to me and to the people. As for finishing the church, building a house, and getting a salary I dare not undertake anything without your directions for fear of contradicting the measures which have been already taken here by Father De Theux and Mr. Van Quickenborne and thus wearing out the patience of the people. For, as I hear, regulations have been made for a house and a farm appertaining to the church, and also for the establishment of a male and female school; of all these things Mr. Van Quickenborne would communicate nothing, not even things that regard

---

<sup>3</sup> It was quite natural for Father Van Quickenborne to be rather careful in what he said to the young secular priest, as his destination lay in the territory assigned by the Concordat to the Society of Jesus.

the ministry, the knowledge of which would have been necessary or at least very useful to me; he seemed to know everything under secrecy. But if you think proper, that I should not have knowledge of these things, or not meddle with them, I humbly entreat you to give me, at least, some directions how I should act, and what I should do for the ministry as well as for my sustenance.”<sup>4</sup>

As early as January 1831, the people living along both sides of Salt River in Ralls County, Missouri, had received the promise of a resident priest. The congregation was called St. Paul's. The people were immigrants from Kentucky and Maryland. Almost all the Catholics of the neighborhood were, as Father Lefevere states in 1834, one continuous series of relations and connexions. And they were constantly intermarrying, because they, knowing the fatal effects of mixed marriages, had scarcely any suitable opportunity of marriage except among members of their relationship. The first settlers of St. Paul's congregation were James Leak, Raphael Leak and John Elliot in 1829. Mass was usually said in the houses of James Leak, Raphael Leak and James Elliot, first by Father John A. Elet, S. J., then by Father Charles Van Quickenborne, S. J. Eighty acres of land were set apart for the use of the congregation. There were forty-five families in the Salt River country when Father Lefevere arrived. Mr. James Leake offered to board the pastor gratis and to take care of his horse. He promised to make him as comfortable as he could, and it should not cost him a cent.

The houses in which the missionary was obliged to say Mass in St. Paul's, as well as in the numerous places he was about to visit on both sides of the Mississippi, were probably all built on the same simple plan: so let me give the description of one as written down in 1831:

“There were two rooms, both on the ground floor, separated from each other with boards so badly joined, that crevices were observable in many places. The rooms were nearly square, and might contain from thirty to forty square yards each. Beneath one of the rooms was a cellar, the floor and sides of which were clay, as left when first dug out; the walls of the house consisted of layers of strong blocks of timber, roughly squared and notched into each other at the corners; the joints filled up with clay. The house had two doors, one of which is always closed in winter, and open in summer to cause a draught. The fire was on the floor at end of the building, where a very grotesque chimney had been constructed of stones gathered out of the land, and walled together with clay and mud instead of cement.

---

<sup>4</sup> Lefevere to Rosati, dated Salt River, January 23, 1833.

It was necessarily of great width, to prevent the fire from communicating with the building. The house was covered with oak shingles; that is to say, thin riven boards nailed upon each other, so as just to over-reach. The floors of the house were covered with the same material, except a large space near the fire, which was paved with small stones, also gathered from the land. The windows were few and rather small. It is in reality true, that the want of light is felt very little in a loghouse; in winter they are obliged to keep fine blazing fires which, in addition to the light obtained from their low wide chimneys, enables the inmates to perform any business that is requisite.

It is, however, by no means to be understood that an American log-house equals in comfort and convenience a snug English cottage. It is quite common to see at least one bed in the same room, as that in which the fire is kept; a practice which invariably gives both the bed and house a filthy appearance. There was no chamber, only a sort of loft, constructed, rather with a view to make the house warmer than to afford additional room. Adjoining one side were a few boards nailed together in the form of a table, and supported principally by the timber in the wall. This was dignified with the name "sideboard." In the center of this room stood another small table, covered with a piece of coarse brown calico; this was the dining table. The chairs, four in number, were the most respectable furniture in the house, having bark of hickory plaited for bottoms. Besides these, there were two stools and a bench for common use,—a candlestick made from an ear of Indian corn, two or three trenchers and a few drinking vessels. One corner of the house was occupied with agricultural implements, consisting of large hoes, axes, etc., for stubbing, called in America, grubbing, flails, wooden forks, all exhibiting specimens of workmanship rather homely. Various herbs were suspended from the roof with a view of being medicinally serviceable, also two guns, one of them a rifle. There were also several hams and sides of bacon, smoked until they were almost black; two or three pieces of beef, etc. The furniture in the other room consisted of two beds and a handloom, with which the family wove the greater part of their own clothes. In the cellar I observed two or three large hewn tubs, full of lard, and a lump of tobacco, the produce of their own land, in appearance sufficient to serve an ordinary smoker his life."<sup>5</sup>

In these straitened circumstances of a country just emerging from the native condition of wild wood and prairie, Father Lefevere began his missionary career. Add to this the frequent contradictions from

---

<sup>5</sup> Extract from a rare pamphlet published in London in 1848, by S. Berger, entitled, "A True Picture of Emigration, or Fourteen Years in The Interior of North America." It relates to the period from 1831 to 1845.

the wicked and wayward, and the indifference, seeming or real, of those for whom he was sacrificing his young life, and we may well understand that his condition at times must have appeared to him as a dreary exile. But, *labor omnia vincit*; labor in the cause of God, conquered all feelings of despondency, all desire for a change; where there is so much to do, and he alone to do it, he will not shrink from any work, but casting his care upon the Lord, he will leave it to Him to bless his labors. The following letter will give us an illustration of this. It is dated Salt River Township, July 12, 1833:

. . . "In my last trip I said Mass at a Catholic house on the bank of the Mississippi, just opposite Quincy, and hearing that Mr. O'Neil, who has been a Brother in the Seminary, was living in that town, I sent over to him to come to Mass. He came over with another Catholic, and both went to their duties. They told me that there were several Catholics living in Quincy, who were greatly desirous of having a church. As this town is in the state of Illinois, I do not know whether it would be licit for me to go there, but if you give me leave, I shall go there the next time, as it is not out of the way I have to go.

"The cholera has been more fatal in Palmyra than in any other place I have ever heard of. Out of a population of six hundred and odd souls 109 persons have fallen victims to that disease. It has also been in New London and throughout the country round about. Several persons have been swept away; and I attribute it to a special favor of God that I have escaped the disease; for during eighteen days I have been continually exposed to all that wet spell of weather, which caused every creek and water-course to be past fording, being wet to the skin every day by a hard beating rain, or by swimming or high fording. All this, however, has brought on a daily fever and ague for these three weeks, whose severity, together with the repeated doses of calomel, tartar emetic and other medicines, has weakened and exhausted me so much that I was not able to walk around the house. The fever now begins to abate, so that I have been able to say Mass today for the first time, not, however, without great difficulty and fatigue and I hope now, that little by little I shall gather my strength so as to be able after a few days, to attend to my former duties."<sup>6</sup>

As Bishop Rosati had received from Bishop Flaget the power of Vicar-General for Illinois, he cheerfully granted Father Lefevere the faculties for any and all places there to which he might be called.

As Father Lefevere here for the first time makes mention of Quincy, we will accompany him on his trip across the river. Quincy has the distinction of being the earliest purely German parish along the whole

---

<sup>6</sup> Lefevere to Rosati, Archives.

course of the Mississippi River above the German Coast. The pioneer settler was the John Wood, a veteran of the War of 1812, who in 1821 took possession of his Congressional grant and built his home on it. The town was named for President John Quincy Adams, the county being called Adams. The first German settler was Michael Mass, a Catholic from Baden, who had left his native city, Forchheim in Breisgau in 1816, made a fortune in Mexico and established his home in Quincy in the year 1829. Father Lefevere met some of the Catholic people of Quincy, who came over to the Missouri side of the river to attend divine service, as his letter states, and were by him encouraged to send a petition to Bishop Rosati for a resident priest. As the Bishop had no one to send, Father Lefevere offered to visit the people of Quincy and surrounding country, in addition to his own numerous and difficult stations, as we learn from his next letter, dated St. Paul's July 3, 1834:

“My Lord—When I had the pleasure of conversing with your Lordship last winter, I nourished the greatest hopes of seeing the church on Salt River completed on my return. But to my sad astonishment, I saw that, during all my absence, not a single stroke had been given to it, and that the prospect of having it finished before long were very dim. Therefore I tarried here these four weeks, visiting the little congregations round about in order to give them all the opportunity of celebrating their Easter. During that time, I made them sensible of their sluggishness and little zeal in the service of God, and their backwardness in contributing to the attainment of the necessary nourishment of their souls. Finally I told them in positive terms, that in the manner I had been until then living among them, without any return of support, a clergyman could not or ought not stay amongst them; that now I was going to visit the scattered Catholics on the side of Illinois and beyond the state of Missouri, that it was now left at their choice either to have a stationary clergyman amongst them or not. For should the church at my return not be completed, and some arrangement for a reasonable support be made up, I was fully determined to leave them, without giving them any hopes of ever obtaining another priest for the present. This (missionary) visit took me about three months, during which I never could pass more than three nights in the same place. I went from Atlas to the head of the Rapids, forty or fifty miles backward and forward in the interior of the country, continually hunting after some Catholics that were newly come to this section.

“Then I returned on this side of the Mississippi among the Half Indians and in the New Purchase where the Catholics are increasing very fast. The difficulties and the hardships I had to struggle with were great; but in all this I had the consolation of baptizing several adult persons, and of seeing many Catholics, who until then had been cold

and indifferent and had never made any use of the Church for many years, take a new start, as it were, in the way of their salvation and devoutly approach the sacraments. In and about Quincy the Catholics are coming in considerably faster, and are very anxious to have a Catholic church built there. Even people of other (religious) professions are very eager in the cause, and have offered a lot or two, and other aids towards the building of a chapel. They had also written a petition in order to entreat Your Lordship to station a clergyman amongst them. Before sending it they asked my advice about it. I told them there was now a great scarcity of priests in the Diocese, that I thought it would be impossible to have a stationary one at present. Nevertheless I encouraged them to send it on and proceed in their good undertaking, saying that, if they had a church, the place would at least be regularly visited, until there should be a priest stationed there. At the Head of the Rapids, about fifty miles above Quincy, there is a still greater prospect for a church, because the Catholics there are more numerous and very zealous toward the building of a church. Several other families, too are going to settle there next fall. I saw some time ago in the *Shepherd*,<sup>7</sup> if I recollect well, that Mr. St. Cyr was destined for the mission in the northern part of Illinois. I presumed it was for Sangamon County. But except for Galena, where as I have seen, a priest is already stationed, I do not think that in the whole northern district of Illinois, there is a more interesting and promising mission than at the Rapids and at Quincy. The Catholics are more numerous, the land fertile, well watered and considerably well timbered, and close to the main navigation. People also seem to move to it from every part of the Union. As for Sangamon county, a great many of the Catholics who used to live there, have moved already to the state of Missouri, and the greater part of the remainder of them intend to move out shortly. And indeed I see no inducement for them to stay there. The land, it is true, is richer than common, but it is extremely sickly. They live toward the head of the Sangamon River, far from navigation, far from market, where no business is stirring, and no money circulating. And it is but too often the case, that Catholics settle in the poorest or most sickly places, and are induced to move or stay there on account of prospects for a church; and this is the great reason that Catholics are generally poor and kept under by other denominations. If Mr. St. Cyr, or any other priest were stationed at Quincy or at the Head of the Rapids, he would find there a wide extensive field for his zeal in the cause of God. Besides many other Catholics scattered through the country, he would find four

---

<sup>7</sup> "The Shepherd of the Valley," the first Catholic paper published west of the Mississippi River.

little congregations in a circuit, as it were of forty or fifty miles at most. These congregations are as yet, small, indeed, but very promising, and increasing daily. There is one at Quincy, one at the Head of the Rapids, another on the Fork of Crooked Creek, and a fourth one at the foot of the Rapids among the Half Indians, where there are several French and American families living. From there he could even go sometimes to Sangamon County. On the other hand it would be very consoling for the missionary. It would be placing the spiritual and temporal comforts within the reach of us both, and also that of the priest stationed at Galena. Then at least we could sometimes see one another. We could ask for consolation in affliction, counsel in doubt, and help in distress, without being exposed so much to die without the consolation of receiving the last Sacraments, as Mr. McMahon of afflictive memory. As for my part, if I stay on Salt River, I absolutely could not visit those places any longer. It would be absenting myself too long from these congregations here and, the distance being so great, I could not stand it a long time being dragged continually through rivers and swamps to visit these places.

“At my return to Salt River the people had just completed the church, the best way they could and seemed to have a great desire to have Divine Service performed in it. We had then, the two last Sundays, for the first time, high Mass in it; a band of singers of the congregation forming a delightful and harmonious choir. The church was crowded with people from every quarter of the County, who seemed to be very much delighted and edified with the Divine Service that was performed. I have said and do say Mass in it until now, as if it were a private house; because I think that, without further necessary ornaments and decorations, this building is not fit to be blessed and dedicated to the service of the Almighty. Still in case of sickness and out of necessity, I keep the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, which I have rendered as neat and decorous as my slender means would permit. The altar and the celebrant are entirely destitute of all necessary deckings and vestments for the august Sacrifice of Mass. There is no becoming chasuble or albe. When I came to Salt River I had but one, which was yet indifferent, and by carrying it now for the space of almost two years in the saddlebags, it has become unfit for use. There are no candlesticks, no linens for the altar, no canopy, no antependium, no carpet, no decent pictures or crucifix, the church in a word is unfit for the performance of Divine Services: and it is but necessity that urges me to say Mass within its walls. I hope then that Your Lordship will open his benevolent eyes to the pressing wants of this church and supply what the congregation, with its utmost endeavors, cannot effect. For as the child goes to the Father for the wants of nature, so does an

humble priest in the name of his entrusted congregation, address himself, without fear of refusal, to his beloved Bishop, for the almost indispensable means of performing his office with decency, proficiency and edification.

“The Catholics here are very eager and desirous to obtain your humble servant for their parish priest, and for my support they have made up a subscription of fifty dollars on this side, and forty on the other side of the river (Salt River). It is little, but it is all that their slender abilities can afford, and I fear, that for want of means, a great part of what is subscribed will never be paid. The settlers here are poor and have large families. They are generally people who could not find subsistence in the state from which they moved, or who met with some great loss or misfortune; and the little money they had on coming to this state they have laid out to enter their land. So that now they live poorly, work hard, and scarcely raise enough to support their own family. But, at all events, I should loathe the idea of abandoning this mission, considering the importance of it and the immense good that can be done here. It is true, a great many of the Catholics here are cold and indifferent in the ways of God; but it seems to me, that this is the very reason why greater efforts should be made in order to warm that coldness and inspire the rising generation with that ardor and zeal, which one day will constitute them good members of the Church and a shining light to other (religious) professions. I feel very sorry, My Lord, that you are not better acquainted with these northern parts of the state of Missouri. Because, I am confident that, were you thoroughly acquainted with them by self-information and experience, you would be convinced that they require more of your episcopal attention than any of the southern parts. Because the land here is so beautiful, healthy and productive of almost every kind of vegetable, and the people are moving to it so rapidly, that it surpasses anything your Lordship has ever seen until now. Catholics too, are daily increasing and scattering through the country. There are here, as it were, seven small congregations in a circuit of about a hundred and twenty miles, and if in some of these places a little chapel were erected, it would be the means of collecting the Catholics together and making many conversions, and also of establishing the Church permanently in these parts. Without such effectual means, I fear greatly that the various sects of Protestants will take the upper hand, since they are also increasing rapidly and seem to bend every effort toward establishing their own sect in every neighborhood. I say these things, not that I would dictate to your Lordship, for I hope that such a suspicion will never arise in your truly episcopal heart. But it is merely a sense of duty that urges me to write this in order to call your partic-

ular attention to this interesting and noble portion of your spiritual realm.

"I have a great desire of enjoying your Lordship's presence, but I cannot start on account of the prairie flies, which are now so bad that it is impossible to travel; and after they begin to subside, which will be towards the middle of August, before I come, I must absolutely make another trip, in order to visit some Catholics whom I left last time, halfway, as it were, on their return to the pale of the Church."<sup>8</sup>

Father Lefevere animadverts with some natural warmth on the seeming predilection of Bishop Rosati for the missions in the southern parts of his spiritual realm, the old French settlements in Southern Missouri, Illinois, and in the state of Louisiana. That the North had the promise of a glorious future far surpassing that of the South, may have dawned on the mind of the far-seeing bishop; yet it was the South that then possessed the strong, well-established parishes, and almost all the cultured elements of his diocese. Father Lefevere knew but little of the South, and what he knew by experience of its religious and social conditions was not favorable. Yet his fine judgment as to the brilliant prospects of the North, at a time when its energies were just beginning to make themselves felt, deserve our grateful recognition. The wide fields were ready for the hands of the sowers, and other fields were waiting for the laborers that should clear and till the soil; yet the laborers were all too few. Between St. Paul's on Salt River and the eastern extremity of Illinois at Chicago; between Dubuque and Galena in the North, and Cahokia and St. Louis to the South there was not a single priest. Of Father Fitzmaurice we have already spoken, and to his successor in Galena we shall return in the course of our wanderings. Of Father Saint Cyr, the first resident priest of Chicago we will have occasion to speak ere long, as his stay at Chicago was about contemporaneous with Father Lefevere's early days at St. Paul's and in the surrounding wilderness. The seed of God's word has already taken root in some parts of this virgin soil: the indications for a great harvest were not as yet very noticeable; still Father Lefevere was full of confidence and his buoyant hope and resistless energy communicated themselves to others, as a pledge of the great things to come.

As Father Lefevere's letter of July 3, 1834, passes in rapid survey, not only the country in the immediate vicinity of Quincy, but also the promising settlements on the lower Illinois River, with its tributaries—Crooked Creek and Sangamon River, a brief account of the physical and social conditions of these advanced posts of civilization in Central Illinois will prove acceptable and, we hope, helpful for the better

---

<sup>8</sup> Lefevere to Rosati, St. Paul's, July 3, 1834.

understanding of what we may have to say concerning the planting of the Church therein.

In 1818 the settled part of Illinois extended a little north of Edwardsville and Alton. The entire state numbered about 45,000 settlers in the villages of Kaskaskia, Prairie du Rocher, Prairie du Pont, Cahokia, Peoria and Chicago.

Immigration on a larger scale from the East and the South set in in 1822. Galena in the farthest north was settled about 1825, though known as a lead center much earlier. "In 1823 Sangamon River and Fulton County were the northern boundaries of the settlements. A military and trading post existed at Chicago, and a dozen families, chiefly French, were gathered at Peoria, formerly known as Lake Pimiteouy. The northern half of Illinois was a continuous wilderness, or as the universal impression was, an interminable prairie, forever uninhabitable.

Morgan county, then including Scott and Cass, had about seventy-five families. Springfield in Sangamon County was a frontier village of a dozen log cabins."<sup>9</sup>

In 1830 the first steamboat went up the Illinois River as far as Peoria.

"The population of the state," says Ford, "had increased by the year 1830 to 157,447; it had spread north from Alton as far as Peoria, principally along the rivers and Creeks, and in such places there were settlers sparsely scattered along the margin of the Mississippi River as far as Galena, sometimes at a distance of a hundred miles apart; also on the Illinois River, to Chicago, with long intervals of wilderness; a few sparse settlements were scattered about all over the southern part of the military tract, Pike and Calhoun counties. The country on the Sangamon River and its tributaries had been settled, . . . leaving a large wilderness tract yet to be peopled between Galena and Chicago; the whole extent of the Rock River and Fox River counties and nearly all the lands of Hancock, McDonough, Fulton, Peoria, Stark, Warren, Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Henry, Bureau, Livingstone, Champaign, Platt and Iroquois, comprising one-third of the state. As yet in 1830 but a few settlements had been made anywhere in the then open-wide prairie but were confined to the margins of the timber in the vicinity of rivers and streams of water."<sup>10</sup>

There was reason for this. The prairie lands were so different from anything the early immigrants had seen. Though marvels of beauty and design, stretching away in endless undulations of wind-swept grass in Summer, with a clump of trees here and there; appar-

---

<sup>9</sup> Perkins, James H., "Annals of the West," 2nd Ed., p. 784.

<sup>10</sup> Ford's "History of Illinois," Ch. 4, pp. 102 and 103.

ently fertile beyond the lands of the East, yet so silent and lonesome, lacking shade and water, uncanny as if a curse rested on the vast expanse of pathless green, the prairies frightened away the bewildered homeseekers.

Thus it came to pass that up to the Black Hawk War, Northern Illinois was almost an uninhabited wilderness, in which the towns of Peru, Lasalle, Ottawa, Newark, Holderness Grove, Galena and Chicago formed the scattered oases of civilization, the two places—Galena on the Mississippi and Peoria on the Illinois River—being connected by the only railroad in the state. For the rest, there was the stage-road through the pathless prairie to Shawneetown on the Ohio, and the Illinois River leading to the outer world.

But with the defeat of Black Hawk the sinister charm seemed broken. The soil was found to be most fertile, the climate not too severe, and the lurking dangers from savage men and wild animals only formed another element of attraction.

Numberless settlements arose in all the counties and every year brought new and flourishing additions to the towns already founded.

Although the great immigration of Irish Catholics was coincident with Irish famine of 1846, 1847 and 1848, and that of the German Catholics found its high-tide during the years 1841-1850, still there was a steady stream of Catholic families pouring into Northern Illinois all through its earlier period and diffusing its elements of progress throughout the length and breadth of the land.

What was to become of their religion amid the hardships and privations of the wilderness, in the loneliness of isolated homesteads, or among men of other faith? That was the great question that touched the heart of many, but most deeply the fatherly heart of Bishop Rosati. For the Bishop of St. Louis had in 1818 been intrusted by Bishop Flaget of Bardstown with the spiritual care of the Catholic settlements of Illinois along the Mississippi. At that time this commission was comparatively easy, as these settlements were all in the immediate neighborhood of St. Louis. But as the settlements were extended farther and farther every year the difficulty of attending them grew in proportion.

In order to provide properly for the spiritual wants of Illinois, the territory should be under his immediate jurisdiction, especially as the Mississippi River and its eastern tributaries formed the only high-ways of travel. On June 25 Bishop Rosati answers a letter of Bishop Flaget, then the Ordinary of Illinois; "I concur with your opinion that the limits of my diocese should be fixed at the 12th degree of longitude west of Washington. I also desire that the line be continued further north."<sup>11</sup> This arrangement was ultimately approved by Rome

<sup>11</sup> Rosati to Flaget, Archives.

June 17, 1834, in the following words: "The diocese of St. Louis comprises the state of Missouri, together with the territory called Arkansas and, until the Holy See decrees otherwise, it shall include the territory also on the west side of the Mississippi (i. e. Iowa). The diocese, then, of Vincennes shall comprise the state of Indiana together with a part of Illinois, to-wit: let a straight line be drawn from Fort Massac (36 miles above the junction of Ohio and Mississippi), along the east boundaries of the counties, Johnson, Franklin, Jefferson, Marion, Fayette, Shelby, and Marion as far as the Rapids of the Illinois River, which are about eight miles above the city of Ottawa in the County of La Salle, and thence up to the northern limits of the state so that the part of Illinois lying west of this line shall belong to the diocese of St. Louis, the eastern part however to the diocese of Vincennes."<sup>12</sup> By this decree Chicago was placed under the jurisdiction of Bishop Simon William Gabriel Bruté; nevertheless this rising metropolis of the West was, at least for a time, to be administered by a priest from St. Louis, Father John Mary Irenaeus Saint Cyr. Indeed there was a movement to place all the state of Illinois under the jurisdiction of St. Louis, but it failed through the strenuous opposition of Bishop England's party in the American hierarchy.

---

<sup>12</sup> "Maximas Inter" of Gregory XVI, in "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. II, p. 411.

## FATHER LEFEVERE'S FAR-FLUNG MISSIONS

Three years of constant labor and many privations had now thoroughly seasoned the naturally robust man to the inclemencies of the weather, as well as to the unreasonableness and ingratitude of men. To build up the Kingdom of God in his missionary territory on both sides of the Mississippi River, the largest and most difficult in the diocese, was his sole ambition. St. Paul's on Salt River remained his headquarters. Around it lay like a crown of mingled thorns and roses, the Missouri counties of Pike, Lincoln, Monroe, Marion, Lewis, Clarke and Shelby with their ever increasing Catholic population of Irish, German and native American descent. Beyond these missions lay the vast territory along the Illinois River and its tributaries, the Fever River district, however, as well as Dubuque on the Iowa side, being now in charge of Father Mazzuchelli. On October 6th, 1836, Father Lefevere sends the following report<sup>1</sup> to Bishop Rosati; in regard to his experiences in Illinois:

"I have been deeply engaged in the constant exercises of the mission ever since my departure from St. Louis. When I reached Salt River after a mission of 18 days, I had no sooner received your letter of the 9th of August conveying the doleful intelligence of the death of our much beloved Mr. M. Condamine,<sup>2</sup> but another one was handed to me which called me in all haste into the state of Illinois, to assist two persons at the point of death. So that, although much fatigued and thinking to be at my journey's end, I was obliged to set out again, and ride in full speed upwards of a hundred miles to the County of McDonough, where, instead of two, I found numbers of Catholics dangerously sick of the billious and congestive fevers, which complaints were so prevailing there and in the adjacent countries, that I have been all this while so intensively engaged in visiting and assisting the sick in various parts of Illinois, that I could not find leisure, many a time, to say my office, and have often been in danger of perishing in the difficult crossing of swamps, and high watercourses. But thanks be to God, I have escaped safe so far; sickness is now abating, and I hope

---

<sup>1</sup> Lefevere to Rosati, October 6, 1836, in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

All the letters of Peter Paul Lefevere are printed in the "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," volumes II and III.

<sup>2</sup> Father Condamine had been intended for the missions in North Illinois but, on Father Mazzuchelli's return, received the appointment to Cahokia, where he died on August 8, 1836.

to be at rest for sometime in attending the different stations here in Missouri.

“The prospect of having a stone church erected at the Head of the Des Moines Rapids seems to have failed. Mr. George Atcheson has sold out his property; it has fallen into the hands of an Eastern company. But I hope that the congregation which consists of fifteen families, will shortly be able to build one themselves.

“The congregation of Crooked Creek, hearing the good news of soon having a priest stationed amongst them, have purchased 40 acres of land in your name for the church, of which I hold the certificate. This congregation, being on the east line of Hancock County, and west of McDonough, would be the most central place of that mission, and would likewise offer the most suitable and convenient residence for a priest. There are upwards of 30 Catholic families, all zealous and much devoted to religion; and as they all live tolerably compacted, there might soon be a female (educational) establishment made and decently supported. From there he, (Saint Cyr) might extend his mission to the Head of the Rapids and to the Half Indians’ reservation which is only a distance of 25 to 30 miles. Also to the northwest corner of Fulton County, at a distance of 40 miles where there is a small congregation of fervent Catholics, who, last summer, have laid off a town named St. Augustin, which from its situation, must soon become a considerable inland town. Then he could now and then go to Peoria, Macomb, Rushville, Meredocia, Beardstown, Jacksonville, Naples, etc., where are, here and there, some number of Catholics living, but principally to Quincy, which is 55 miles from Crooked Creek, and where there is a large and still growing congregation of between 40 and 50 families in and about town. When I was there last week, the Catholics were so transported with the prospects I gave them of being regularly visited, that they became more anxious than ever to build a church. To this end we held a meeting and appointed five trustees to draw and make up a subscription and superintend the building of the church. A respectable gentlemen, not a Catholic, was also kind enough to give a lot of ground for the purpose, which was then immediately surveyed and whereof the deed was to be made in your name the following day. More than half of this congregation are German, and they are particularly desirous of having preaching in German now and then.

The Lutheran Germans, who also have formed a small congregation here, have got a German preacher from Cincinnati to preach for them; and the Presbyterians, who continually endeavor to draw all on their side, have offered him their meeting house, and contribute largely towards his support. Even some of the Catholics, wearied of being

without Divine Service on Sundays, and desirous of hearing a sermon, have assisted in making up his salary. Thus you see that this congregation stands, above all, in need of immediate attendance. For the Catholics have now obtained a good footing in Quincy, but if they be neglected, I greatly fear, that footing will not be of long duration. I would therefore beg you, earnestly, to send out to that mission, if possible, a priest who speaks the German language besides the English, for there is another congregation of Germans in Beardstown on the Illinois River, 12 miles east of Rushville, where he could do an immense deal of good. If it be not possible, I hope you will endeavor to get someone to go from St. Louis at least two or three times a year to Quincy; Mr. Lutz, for instance, or Father Helias or anyone else, which might easily be done; for two boats are running regularly, every week, the trip from St. Louis and back. Moreover the Germans have promised to pay the priest who would go, for his trouble and expense."<sup>3</sup>

Father Lefevere's anxiety in regard to the Catholics of Quincy was not without cause; for in the course of time one of the first and most influential promoters of the church there apostatized. Owing to press of circumstances, however, five months passed by without anything else being attempted than an official inquiry as to the conditions, instead of a promise of assistance. And yet Father Lefevere was in urgent need of help, especially for Illinois. In order to obtain favorable results, now that the Bishop's attention was aroused. Father Lefevere made haste to answer his inquiries, as clearly and with as much detail as possible, under date of St. Paul's March the 9th, 1837:

"Right Rev. Sir—Your letter of the 5th of January 1837, came to hand a few days since and I hasten, with the first opportunity to comply with your request, in answering the several interrogatories therein contained. I shall answer them severally and precisely as possible. (1st) the number of Catholics I visit is from 1,000 to 2,000 souls. (2nd) in the mission I have hitherto attended there are fourteen stations, id est, congregations, big and small; besides a great number of scattered families not belonging to any particular congregation; of these there are eight stations in the state of Missouri, four in the state of Illinois, and two in the Wisconsin territory, viz:

"*In the state of Missouri*; 1, in Pike County on Pinno Creek; 2, in Lincoln County, between Troy and Louisville; 3, in Ralls County, on Salt River, fifteen miles northwest from New London; 4, on Cedar Creek; 5, in Monroe County, on Indian Creek, seven miles north from Florida; 6, on the South Fork of Salt River, six miles out from Florida;

---

3 Many of the places mentioned here developed into flourishing parishes and religious centers.

7, in Marion County, in the town of Palmyra; 8, in Lewis County, on the Wyaconda River, ten miles northeast from Tully. *In the State of Illinois*; 1, in Adams County, in the town of Quincy; 2, in Hancock County at the Head of the lower Rapids; 3, at the Head of Crooked Creek, twenty-five miles east from Commerce; 4, in the northwest corner of Fulton County, on Cedar Creek. *In the Wisconsin territory*; 1, at Keokuk, in Half Indian tract, between the river Des Moines and the Mississippi; 2, on Skunk River, ten miles west from Fort Madison. (3rd) the number of baptisms of infants is seventy-seven. (4th) number of adults, eight. (5th) number of converts, eight. (6th) as to the number of deaths, I am not able to make a statement; but the number of burials I have performed, is nine. (7th) number of Marriages, thirty-six. (8th) number of first communions, about twenty-five. (9th) number of Paschal communions is 497. As to the number of dispensations for marriages, which I have granted, it is as follows: (1) dispensations upon the impediment existing between baptized and non-baptized, fourteen. (2) Upon the impediment of consanguinity in the second degree, two; of consanguinity in the third degree, one. Total eighteen.

Such is the statement, Right Rev. Sir, I can give in answer to the several questions you have asked me. These stations above named, together with the numerous families widely scattered in remote parts of the same and other counties, keep me continually travelling from one part of the country to another, and were I to go whithersoever Catholics dispersed in the country invite and beg me to come, one trip would take me six months steady riding.

“And although these Catholics ought to be visited, yet it is absolutely out of my power. For no sooner had I ended one journey, than I have to commence another, and so on in rotation; so much so that in the course of the year, I cannot remain one week steady at home. And particularly this last winter, during the coldest weather, at a time when I thought to enjoy a few days for myself, I was called out to the sick; three times into the State of Illinois, once to the River Des Moines, and once into the Wisconsin territory, 150 miles north from Ralls County; and that at a time when the snow was about eighteen inches deep on the ground, and I had to ride a distance of twelve miles on the ice on the Mississippi. Then on my return the weather breaking up with a sudden thaw, the waters began to run so swiftly that I was compelled to travel all the night and in full speed in order to get the start of the high waters, and it was then only by lucky circumstances, or special Providence of God that I, several times, escaped being drowned. I must finish this tale for fear of being prolix. But if ever you have been on extensive missions, Right Rev. Sir, particularly in a newly settled country, like this, where people are

poor, without sufficient house-room and destitute even of all the necessary conveniences of life, you must be acquainted with the hardships and privations to which a priest is continually exposed, and the little decency with which the sacred rites can be performed. To those unacquainted with its meaning, the celebration of mass in little log-cabins which serve for work-room, refectory, dormitory and kitchen, to numerous families, must look more like a comedy than a religious action. For my part, I am thoroughly acquainted with them. Four and a half years' constant exercise in this mission has made me taste so much of this bitter cup, that without assistance, I am becoming unable to continue it much longer. Moreover I perceive that, after much toil and labor, I have done but little good to others, and greatly endangered my own life and salvation. For I perceive but too well that, when I am attending one congregation, religion suffers in other congregations, for want of their being regularly attended and instructed. Whilst, on the other hand, the most of my time being spent in traveling, necessity must of course, compel me to retrench from my own religious duties and devotional exercises; and such a necessity often repeated, is but too apt to engender a habit. As the money you have received at different times from several parts of Europe, was given for the very purpose of supporting the missions, I had always entertained great hopes that you would have lent some pecuniary aid to erect, here and there, a plain building, at least in places where it is indispensably necessary to celebrate the Divine Mysteries with any degree of becoming decency; and my hopes were so much the more confident, because I knew that you knew that this mission stood the most in need of it. But now my hopes look frustrated, and I begin to despair. From the little zeal and interest you have hitherto manifested toward this mission, it appears to me that you think it not worth your attention and that all your object is to ornament St. Louis and care but little about the rest.<sup>4</sup> But I must confess that, when I am in St. Louis, my heart sickens whenever I behold the superfluous splendor and luxe that is there displayed about the Cathedral, whilst religion here suffers from want of things indispensably necessary. This, in my opinion, looks pretty much like a father of a family arrayed in the most splendid apparel surrounded with a parcel of his children stark naked. I was also in hopes, Right Rev. Sir, that you would have stationed a priest on Crooked Creek, for the missions of Illinois and Wisconsin Territory, as you promised me last summer; and that you would have mentioned something about it to me in answer to a letter I wrote to you on the subject

---

<sup>4</sup> The bitter criticism is directed especially at the Cathedral built by Bishop Rosati.

last Autumn. But as I have never received or heard a word about it, I must now also confess to you that I am tired and wearied out, and that what you tacitly seem to exact of me with regard to my continuing these long protracted journeys seems to me unreasonable and impracticable. Wherefore, unless there be someone sent to divide with me the labors of this mission, I have resolved to abandon it and retire to myself, or leave the Diocese. Not because I am not willing to labor in the ministry, but because I feel unable to continue what I have hitherto done. For let the work be ever so toilsome and fatiguing, I will cheerfully undertake it, provided I am able to do it with usefulness to the salvation of others without endangering my own. But in the present circumstances and upon other considerations not mentioned, I feel myself under no obligation to stay any longer. In finishing, I beg of you now, as a favor, to let me know by letter, whether and when you will send a priest to the Illinois.”<sup>5</sup>

This earnest though somewhat rude expostulation was taken by Bishop Rosati in the spirit in which it had been made, and Father Lefevere’s urgent request for an assistant in his vast field of labor was sure to be fulfilled.

McDonough County is an open prairie traversed by a stream of water called Crooked Creek. Its first settlement was Carter’s, made in 1826. What had delayed its progress was the lack of timberlands, so necessary for building and fuel. The principal settlements in 1834 were Macomb and Fountain Green, the latter place about twenty-five miles from Commerce, on the Mississippi River, afterward called Nauvoo, the one-time home of the Mormons. The Head of Des Moines Rapids, also called the Lower Rapids to distinguish them from the Upper Rapids at Nauvoo, is Warsaw, in Hancock county, just across the river from Keokuk, Iowa.

According to Father Lefevere there were a good number of German Catholics at Quincy, which, therefore, should have a German priest, and there was also an entire settlement of German Catholics at Beardstown, on the Illinois River. Father Lutz, whom Lefevere wished to be sent to the Germans at Quincy, was the Indian missionary of a former chapter of this book. Father Helias, S. J., the future apostle of Central Missouri was then busily occupied in the missionary field in and around St. Louis, especially among the Catholic Germans.

Father Lefevere has in his official report for 1836 given a statement of the “Number of Catholics living in the respective counties, expressed here below, with the different churches therein built or proposed to be built:”

---

<sup>5</sup> Lefevere to Rosati, March 9, 1837, Archives.

*STATE OF MISSOURI*

County of Lincoln church proposed to be built.....	108
County of Pike.....	113
County of Ralls, one church already built (St. Paul's) in Salt River Township, and another one now a building in the town of Cincinnati.....	455
County of Monroe, a church (St. Stephen's) to be built in Sandy Creek, five miles north of Florida.....	232
County of Marion .....	69
County of Lewis, a church proposed to be erected on the Wyaconda River, eight miles northwest of Tully.....	109
Half Indian Tract.....	38
	<hr/> 1124

*STATE OF ILLINOIS*

Adams County, a church proposed to be built in Quincy .....	205
Hancock County, a church is to be built at the Des Moines Rapids, and another at the headwaters of Crooked Creek, near Fountain Green .....	214
Schuyler County.....	29
Fulton County a church proposed in the Town of St. Augustine....	32
McDonough County.....	25
Peoria County.....	13
	<hr/> 518''6

It will be noticed that in this account the missions of the Northwest Territory i. e., of Iowa are wanting. The reason is because they, with Galena and Prairie du Chien, had been turned over by Bishop Rosati to the Dominican Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, on June 24th, 1835, in answer to his letter from Prairie du Chien, dated March 12th, 1835:

“Most Rev. Bishop—I was informed a few days ago that the territory of Wisconsin now forms a part of your Diocese and, as a consequence, the two priests of this territory are under your ecclesiastical jurisdiction. For the last three months I have been making preparations to leave this place, intending to go to the State of Ohio. In the month of April I went down the Mississippi River in a steamboat, using the opportunity to inform myself concerning the state of these missions.

Bishop Resé has not yet received any reply from Rome regarding me, and now, I, who wanted to do so much, am tired of being left alone

among difficulties without any assistance, and of being exposed to so many dangers. I have started an association at Prairie du Chien for the building of a church; the men pay fifty cents each month, and the women twenty-five cents, but my church will not be built without the assistance of a priest. I am preparing many for First communion and others to make their Easter. Father D. Vanderbroek, a Hollander of the Order of St. Dominic, is now the pastor of Green Bay, where there are no less than 500 French and about just as many Catholic Indians.”<sup>7</sup>

In his answer of July 27th of the same year Father Mazzuchelli informs Bishop Rosati that he had in the meantime visited his Dominican Superior, Father Young, at Somerset, Ohio, and obtained permission to remain, for a time, under the rule of the Bishop of St. Louis. But a difficulty arose, as the permission had been given orally, whereas Bishop Rosati required it in writing. But this matter was arranged pleasantly, and Father Mazzuchelli entered the Diocese of St. Louis and labored therein with truly apostolic zeal and corresponding success. His appointment to the missions of Galena and Dubuque was sent him by Bishop Rosati on June 26th, 1835.

At last, after long and weary waiting, Father Lefevere received notice of the appointment of Father Saint Cyr for the missions of northern Illinois, that had been in his own pastoral care since 1833.

On the 20th of February 1837, Bishop Rosati sent word to Father Lefevere that Father St. Cyr had returned from Chicago, and was destined for Crooked Creek; and on the 17th of March Father Lefevere expressed his delight and gratitude. “It is truly consoling to me, and will, no doubt, be the cause of much good in that mission. I feel sorry, very sorry, that I cannot go to St. Louis about the time you would wish me to go. But now I have made several appointments at different stations; also several persons have made preparations and have fixed the time for marrying after Easter, so that my absence at this time would cause much disturbance. For, having caused some discontent among the people, by frequently disappointing them on account of the many and distant sick calls I had last winter, I should not wish to disappoint them any more, if I could possibly avoid it. Moreover, many persons are now preparing to make their Easter, and might perhaps neglect it, if I were to absent myself at this time. So that I shall not be able to leave here before the third or fourth Monday after Easter. I hope, therefore, that you will excuse me; I will give Mr. Saint Cyr all the instruction and encouragement possible with regard to that mission. Should he desire to start to that mission sooner, and have my company, he might come to Salt River, and I will conduct him up and introduce

---

<sup>7</sup> Mazzuchelli to Rosati, March 12, 1835, in Archives.

him to the congregation on Crooked Creek; if not, he may expect me in St. Louis about the fourth week after Easter."<sup>8</sup>

With the appointment of Father Saint Cyr for Crooked Creek and Quincy, Father Lefevere's missionary activities were confined to Northeast Missouri. We will give the substance of his report for 1836, with some additional information derived from other unpublished sources:

	Number of Souls
Ralls County, Cincinnati mission, St. Mark's Church.....	} 407
Ralls County, Salt River Mission, St. Paul's Church.....	
Lincoln County, Louisville Mission, St. Simeon's Church.....	84
Pike County, Pinno Creek Mission.....	} 106
Pike County, Cedar Creek Mission.....	
Monroe County, Indian Creek Mission, St. Stephen's Church.....	261
Marian County, Palmyra Mission.....	95
Lewis County, Wyaconda River Mission, St. John's Ev. Church...	} 160
Clark County, West Santa Fe Mission, St. Bartholomew's Church.	
	1113 <sup>9</sup>

Concerning the early settlers of St. Paul's we have already given an account. At Cincinnati a church was built under the title of St. Mark. Concerning St. Simeon's Church at Louisville, in Lincoln County, we find that there was a frame building, thirty feet square, erected in 1838. The first Catholics of the place were Dr. Hayden and Enoch Emerson, who arrived there in 1830. The first priests to say Mass were the Jesuit Fathers, Felix Verreydt and Charles Van Quickenborne, in 1832. Mass was said by these priests and by Father Lefevere in the house of Mr. Emerson and Dr. Hayden. The number of families in 1838 is given as twenty. Passing over Pike county, we come to Stephen's at Indian Creek, in Monroe County, which received its first Catholic settlers in the year 1832, in the families of Leonard Green and Alexander Winnsett. Mass was said and other services were held in the house of Leonard Green for three years, then at Raphael Yates' and Mr. Piersall's homes. The church, a log building, forty-eight by twenty-five feet, was erected in 1838. The first Mass was said in it on the third Sunday in August of the same year. There were eight acres of land belonging to the church and a graveyard, which were given by Vincent Yates and James Murphy. In 1838 there were thirty-eight Catholic families at Indian Creek.

The following letter, written on December 26th, 1837, is the last one received by Bishop Rosati from St. Paul:

<sup>8</sup> Lefevere to Rosati, February 17, 1837, Archives.

<sup>9</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese Reports.

"Right Rev. Sir—I received your letter of the 6th of September last, and in compliance with your request, as I am now on the eve of starting on a mission to the northern boundary of the state, I hasten to send you, enclosed, the statistics of my mission for the year 1837, which I have made up to the best of my knowledge. You will perceive that the space under the head: Numerus Confirmatorum, is left blank. I have left it so, in hope that you will be so kind as to fill it out yourself, being fully persuaded that no one can know better than yourself the exact number of confirmations you have given in this mission, and how often you have visited this part of your diocese during the five years that I have now attended it.

"With regard to your request under the head notatu digna, I can only state that I arrived here on Salt River, and took charge of this mission on the 5th day of January in the year 1833, and have continued to attend it ever since. Previous to that period, no priest or missionary, that I know, has ever resided, or been stationary in this mission. But during the two or three years proceeding, some of the Jesuits visited a small part of it, once or maybe thrice a year. The church of St. Paul, in Ralls County, is the only one, which with great difficulty I got, in a manner, completed in the year 1834, and in which Divine Service is now performed. Besides this church I have three other ones a building, viz., One on Indian Creek, which is nearly completed; one in Lincoln County, in Louisville, and one in Clark County, on the Wyaconda River, which are commenced but, for want of means, cannot go on. No church in my mission, that I know, has as yet been blessed, though I begged you several times to pay a visit to these poor congregations of your Diocese, and bless the church on Salt River."<sup>10</sup>

The sly sarcasm as to Bishop Rosati knowing best how many Confirmations there have been in Ralls County, was perhaps the means of bringing the overburdened Bishop to the fulfilment of Father Lefevere's great longings; but not before the month of September 1838. Bishop Rosati notes in his Diary under date of September 27th, 1838: "We visited the Church of St. Paul, which is a wooden building, but beautiful in its simplicity and poverty. Near the church there is a cemetery and a garden and the house of the pastor which is very small. Reverend M. Lefevere deserves great commendation for the care with which he keeps all things in church and house in decent, neat, and orderly condition." The 30th day of September the sacrament of Confirmation was administered by Bishop Rosati to forty-five persons. Father Lefevere sang Highmass and Father Van Quickenborne preached a sermon on the sacrament of Confirmation. An immense multitude had

---

<sup>10</sup> Lefevere to Rosati, December 26, 1837, Archives.

gathered in and around the Church to witness the solemnities. On October 1st, the Bishop and Fathers Verhaegen and Lefevere rode to St. Stephens Church on Indian Creek, where on the following Sunday Confirmation was administered to twenty-eight persons. Departing from Indian Creek the company passed through Florida, Sante Fe, Mexico, Fulton, Bloomfield and stopped at Jefferson City to administer Confirmation. There the Bishop and Father Helias proceeded to New Westphalia, Union and Washington, and arrived in St. Louis October 18th. Bishop Rosati's final remarks about the pastor and people of Salt River were: "M. Lefevere keeps his Churches and congregations in the best order. The people are very good practical Catholics."<sup>11</sup>

On November 10th, 1838, Father Lefevere assisted at the consecration of St. Augustine in English Settlement, Illinois. In 1840 he attended the Fourth Provincial Council of Baltimore (May 14 to 24th) as Theologian of Bishop Hailandiere of Vincennes and on June 1st, he set sail for his native land, in company with Bishop Rosati and Father Joseph A. Lutz. Meanwhile his name had been sent to Rome for the Coadjutorship to Bishop Resé of Detroit, and administrator of the diocese. The bulls of appointment awaited his return to America. He was consecrated by Bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick in the Cathedral of Philadelphia; November 21st, 1841. The diocese had been four years without episcopal supervision. Bishop Resé outlived his coadjutor many years, in the seclusion of a convent in his native city Hildesheim in the Kingdom of Hanover.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Rosati's Diary, *passim* and Letter to Father Timon, October 20, 1838.

<sup>12</sup> Bishop Resé was actively concerned in the foundation and early management of the Leopoldine Society of the Austrian Empire. When Bishop of Detroit he gave signs of a mental trouble and the diocese received an administrator in the person of Father Lefevere. Bishop Resé could never be prevailed upon to resign; hence Bishop Lefevere remained Administrator of Detroit.

## CHAPTER 19

### FATHER SAMUEL MAZZUCHELLI, O.P.

"The little episcopal city of Dubuque," writes Father Mazzuchelli, in his *Memoir*,<sup>1</sup> "dated its origin from the year 1833. Prior to that date all the present territory of Iowa was still inhabited by numerous Indian tribes. The Government having bought from these tribes the land adjoining the river, after various treaties, or to speak more correctly, after the expenditure of generous sums of money, many thousands of the citizens of the Republic settled there within a few months, but especially in the vicinity of Dubuque on account of the lead mines. The traffic in this valuable metal created the city of Dubuque, named for the last French trader (Julien Dubuque), who after spending many years of his life in that place with the Indians, died in 1811."<sup>2</sup> Across the river from Dubuque was the village of Galena, of about equal size and similar composition. Farther north between the Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers lay the ancient town of Prairie du Chien. All these places were anxious for a resident priest, who should build up the church among them. This eager desire was fulfilled by the coming of the Dominican Missionary Father Mazzuchelli.

But what were the antecedents of this man that was to instill new life into these drooping missions of the North. Father Samuel Charles Mazzuchelli, O.P., was born in Milan, Italy, in the year 1806, of a distinguished family. In 1822 he became a novice of the Order of St. Dominic in Rome. When the first Bishop of Cincinnati, Edward Fenwick, himself a Dominican, came to Rome in 1828, seeking helpers for the missions in the wild Northwest, the youthful deacon, full of glowing dreams of religious triumphs and romantic adventures in the wilderness of America, obtained permission from his superiors to join the saintly Bishop. In 1830 he was ordained priest and immediately set out for the Island of Mackinac, the most northern mission of the diocese of Cincinnati. Mackinac was the starting point for Father Marquette's voyage of discovery: it was to be the starting point also for Father Mazzuchelli's missionary journeys which were to bring him in such close union with the north-

---

1 "Memorie storiche," Historical Memoirs, was published in Milan in 1844, without the name of the author. There can be no doubt, however, about the authorship of the book; Samuel Charles Mazzuchelli wrote the *Memorie* in Italian. The only other published writings of Father Mazzuchelli are a collection of letters addressed to Bishop Rosati, found in the Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese, and translated by us for the "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vols. II and III.

2 *Memoirs*, p. 163.

eastern part of Bishop Rosati's diocese of St. Louis. Mackinac was the center of a parish that extended from Lake Huron to the Mississippi River. Here stood the only chapel in the wide territory, but the parishioners, Catholic Indians, and half-breeds, Frenchmen from Canada, and native Creoles, Irish miners, and German farmers, and scattered members of almost every nation, were settled down or wandered about in every part of it. To supply their spiritual necessities in life and in death, the pastor was obliged to travel almost constantly, in winter on snowshoes or in a sled, in summer on horseback or in a birch canoe. Mass was said at times under a spreading green-wood tree, sometimes in the wigwam of a converted Indian, sometimes in the rude dwelling of a trader, miner or trapper. In Green Bay Father Mazzuchelli built the first church and opened the first school, not only of the neighborhood, but of the entire territory of Wisconsin, excepting, of course, the church built at Prairie du Chien by the Trappist Dunand which had disappeared when Mazzuchelli arrived. Here Bishop Fenwick came shortly before his death to visit the indefatigable missionary, and to administer confirmation to a large number of his flock.<sup>3</sup>

Father Mazzuchelli always manifested, in word and deed, a romantic, yet truly Christian love for the poorest of the poor, the wild children of the forest and prairie. The Menominees were his special favorites, but the other tribes of Wisconsin also ever found a friend in their "Blackgown." The Indians in truth held Father Mazzuchelli in highest esteem. As an illustration of their friendly relations, we would insert the speech of Whirling Thunder, in behalf of the Winnebago Nation held in 1833 in the presence of Father Mazzuchelli. The Indian Chief addressed the Government agent: "Father, listen to us! By the treaty of last Fall we are to have established at Prairie du Chien a school, as the most of our nation are here on the Benecalt River, we are anxious to have the school placed among us. You are aware, and we wish our Great Father to know that many of us have joined the Catholic Church and have become Christians. Many men of our nation seem desirous of becoming civilized through the exercises of our friend here, the Blackgown (Father Mazzuchelli), we therefore, hope that our prayers may be granted by our Great Father; we will then be able to have our children educated among us and in the Catholic Faith. We have never had anyone until lately to teach us the word of God. We begin to see light and we wish to know more of our Great Father above. We want Father Mazzuchelli to remain with us, and the school established among us."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Memoirs*, Introduction by Archbishop Ireland, and Chapters II-V, pp. 11-29.

<sup>4</sup> "American Catholic Historical Researches," vol. XII, p. 61.

Next to the love of God as expressed in the burning zeal for souls, and naturally flowing from this fountain-head of all true virtue, come the distinctive qualities of our noble-minded priest, his fearlessness in danger, his patience in adversity, his disinterestedness in all his undertakings.

"In perils often" Father Mazzuchelli might say with the Apostle of the gentiles. One example only can we give: It was a morning in March that the priest was called from his home at Galena to bring the last Sacraments to a dying person in Iowa Territory. The ice on the river was broken up by the sudden change in the temperature, and was carried along with the swift current. The priest found no other means of transportation than a sort of narrow canoe hollowed out of a single trunk of a tree, which had been lying on the bank all through the winter. Father Mazzuchelli engaged four men to row him across the river. After pushing out about half a mile the water began to pour in through several cracks made wider by collisions with the drifting ice. The steersman courageously managed the frail craft, ordering all to remain seated and perfectly quiet. Father Mazzuchelli felt secure amid the seething, rushing waters, bearing as he did, the Blessed Sacrament upon his breast. Kneeling in the water and paddling with a single oar, he followed the directions of the steersman, and when the water had risen to within four fingers length of the rim of the canoe, they reached a little island where they repaired their boat and proceeded on their voyage.

Of Father Mazzuchelli's patience his letters give abundant examples: of noble disinterestedness, we would add a brief word. "It may be well to remark," says he, "that the generosity of the faithful in these parts depends in a great measure upon the disinterestedness of the Priest. If he manifest any desire for money, then all is lost for the Church; for he is the sole agent, secretary and treasurer. If he does not divest himself completely of self, and consecrate himself without reservation to the propagation of the truth, that indispensable boundless confidence of his people loses itself in doubts and suspicions, and at last vanishes entirely. The great secret of finding money where it does not seem to exist, lies in the sincere disinterestedness of the Priest... In the United States the church is generally the poorest of the poor: for either a house of worship must be built, or else it requires repairs, or necessary furnishings for the altar. So if the Priest desires to see the people liberal and full of confidence in his personality, he must himself lead the way. Keeping nothing for himself, and putting everything that he possesses in the treasury of the church. The same Providence that cared for him in the past will not fail him in the future: forever true are those words of our Divine

Master: "When I sent you without purse and script and shoes, did you want anything? (Luke 22, 35)."<sup>5</sup>

In July 1835, when Father Mazzuchelli arrived at Galena, he found, as he himself says, "not a vestige of the sacred things necessary for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice." In an upper room of the dwelling of one of the parishioners he erected an altar, probably of a dry-goods-box, which transformed the place into a church. In one corner, separated from the altar by a curtain was the bed of the Priest. So poor, yet so intimate with God, was this second spring-tide of the church in Galena. But this beautiful promise of a rich harvest seemed to be doomed to failure once more. On April 18, 1836, Bishop Rosati, on hearing that Father Mazzuchelli had been recalled by his Superior in the Order, entrusted the parishes of Galena, Dubuque and Prairie du Chien to Father Condamine. When Father Condamine arrived at his destination, Father Mazzuchelli's recall had been revoked, and Father Condamine was appointed to Cahokia, May 8th, 1836, where he died soon after his return.

Father Mazzuchelli in going to the ends of the diocese of Detroit found himself well within the limits of the diocese of St. Louis. Dubuque on the west bank of the Mississippi, and Galena and Prairie du Chien on the Illinois and Wisconsin side had been for more than twenty years, under the spiritual care of Bishop Rosati. Father Mazzuchelli, though coming to this field without lawful authority, was gladly received by the Bishop of St. Louis, and immediately set to work to establish his three missions on a sound basis. "In the great number of those who seek their support by emigrating to new lands, there are many Catholics, principally from Ireland and Germany; therefore, preserving the Faith in this scattered population, organizing new parishes and building new churches constitutes the most important duties of a Missionary."<sup>6</sup>

This was the program he followed throughout his life. Dubuque was his first care. At the time of his arrival there, July 1835, the village numbered about two hundred and fifty persons, and the country round about probably seven hundred and fifty more. The number of Catholics was two hundred all told. "Nearly all the Catholics were Irish by birth, not a few had acquired a considerable fortune, but the wealth, acquired more by chance than by industry, served rather to their harm than their wellbeing."<sup>7</sup> Yet, as Father Mazzuchelli was firmly convinced, that the place was destined to become an important city, and thought he could do nothing greater and better than to build as fine a church as lay in his power and form a parish around its walls.

---

<sup>5</sup> Memoirs, p. 219.

<sup>6</sup> Memoirs, p. 161.

<sup>7</sup> Memoirs, p. 164.

Mass was said at the home of P. Quigley: the people of the town showed the greatest interest and generosity, so that the corner-stone for the church to be called St. Raphael's, could be laid amid universal rejoicing on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in the year 1835.

Whilst the stone walls of the church destined to be the Cathedral of Dubuque were slowly rising to completion, the tireless missionary turned his main attention to Galena, which then had a population of eight hundred souls, two hundred of whom were Catholics. "The Irish," says Father Mazzuchelli, "were the first to penetrate these regions, but deprived as they were of the efficacious help to the practice of religion, with few exceptions they possessed the Faith without the works which give it life."<sup>8</sup> Father Vincent Badin, Father Lutz, and the Jesuit Van Quickenborne, had visited the Catholics of the place. Fathers McMahon and Fitzmaurice had died there. Father Mazzuchelli at first used a private residence for chapel and rectory. For there was no church and no lot to build on. "The greatest difficulty," he says, "was to find a site, suitable and central for a church. Galena closely surrounded by high hills, has very little space for a city; land suitable for building sites costs considerably more here than in other places. It was necessary to incur a debt of seven hundred and fifty dollars in order to receive sufficient land."<sup>9</sup> The lot being secured, building operations were begun, the pastor himself acting as architect. The foundation was begun on September 12th, 1835. It was dedicated to the Archangel Michael. It was a good sized structure, seventy-four feet in length by forty in width. Father Mazzuchelli was constantly crossing and recrossing the Mississippi between his two missions.

But this work of church building was not without discouragements. On July 14th, 1836 he wrote to Bishop Rosati from Galena: "After many a day of hard work and uneasiness, I succeeded, with the will of God, to complete the stone walls of St. Raphael's Church at Dubuque as high as the roof. Every preparation is now made to raise the roof and two stonecutters are at constant work to make a plain cornice round the building and to finish the front. On the 4th of July the church was used by the people of the town to hear the Oration delivered by a lawyer. I had to act the part of chaplain and say the prayer. The expenses of the building have been very great for one man like me, agitated by many trials. I already paid \$2,400.00. Want of time has hindered me from collecting the \$800.00 due on the subscription, only \$300.00 were lent to me to pay the last debts. I hope to say Mass in St. Raphael's Church next Sunday. The church of Galena is as I left it last Fall, many things have entirely discouraged me in the undertaking; however, last Saturday I took two of my men

---

<sup>8</sup> Memoirs, pp. 166 and 167.

<sup>9</sup> Memoirs, p. 168.

to this place, they now work in the quarry. I opened this quarry on the church lot; about 200 perch of stone are now ready round the foundation, lime and sand are also procured. All this is a great deal here where materials are very scarce. There is not a person here that can move a step for the building of the church. I have to pay for all materials, to the amount of a cent. The most difficult part of the work is the collection. Although I am confident of the great attachment of the people to me, and of the knowledge they have of my disinterestedness, still it is with the greatest reluctance I do begin this work and sincerely wish to abandon it if I could. My constant occupation in May and June about the church of Dubuque has prevented me from attending at the church of Mill-Seat, Wisconsin Territory, 15 miles from this place. Nearly all the materials for the building of it are now ready. Next week I shall spend three or four days about that place to gather all materials, make contracts, collect the money, and begin the work if possible."<sup>10</sup>

Prairie du Chien, also, received a visit from the busy pastor of souls. The entire month of February 1836, was spent there in caring for its five hundred Catholics. Here he received a gift of four acres in the center of the town for the erection of churches. Yet, he felt obliged to resign the charge of Fort Winnebago and Prairie du Chien, as the Redemptorists of Detroit were well able to take over this distant outmission, over which Bishop Resé now held jurisdiction. But besides his financial cares Father Mazzuchelli had also troubles of a legal kind. The church lot in Dubuque had no clear title. In 1834 the U. S. Government gave a permit to Bishop Rosati to occupy this piece of ground for church-purposes, and this included the right of pre-emption. Now a part of the ground was claimed by a widow-woman, who asserted, that in the days of Father Fitzmaurice the decision in regard to her contention was left to arbitration and that the decision was in her favor. A merchant of Dubuque, Mr. O'Farrell, had bought the widow-woman's claim, and now considered all the land as his own. The lot embraced four acres. Father Mazzuchelli advised that a friendly arrangement with Mr. O'Farrell be made and asked for the power of attorney. Then there was a legal tangle over a bequest of \$250 made by Patrick Gray, for establishing the Sisters of Charity in Galena. The executors refused to pay the amount until the Sisters should be established in the town. At last one of the benefactors of the church, Mr. Dowling advanced the amount to Father Mazzuchelli."

The ceaseless tide of population, German and Irish, was now rolling over the entire Northwest, scattering upon its prairies and thickening along its rivers, and streams. New towns were springing up below Galena

---

<sup>10</sup> Mazzuchelli to Rosati, July 14, 1836, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>11</sup> Mazzuchelli to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

on both sides of the Mississippi, and the Catholic part of their inhabitants, sent urgent calls to Father Mazzuchelli to come and build chapels for them. Rock Island, Davenport, Burlington, Fort Madison, Nauvoo and Keokuk were anxiously waiting for his coming.

"I have during the winter made a general visit through the country east of the Mississippi and returned yesterday from my last visit for this season. It has been impossible for me to go to Rock Island on account of the bad roads and the high streams. Should my health continue good as it is I shall visit that place as soon as the boats will run. I flatter myself with the idea that you will send to this country a good, active man to help me; for my church affairs take all my time. It would be well to remark to the priest who has to share my labors, that I have no place of my own in Galena; but in Dubuque a room under the church, entirely unfinished: for my rule is, the church first, the priest's room next.

I board in various houses, for I have no means to pay regular boarding; it is a bad table, now and then. I have good beds, but no furniture. No salary. Baptisms and marriages will give enough to buy clothes, I must say that a salary was offered to me in Dubuque last summer. I declined it, because I have no fixed place, and because the church could not be finished whilst the people are obliged to pay a salary. The pew rent will in time become an excellent support for the priest. Disinterestedness, patience and humility are indispensable with the people I have here. You know well the great faults of the nation I have to live with."<sup>12</sup>

Towards the end of March Father Mazzuchelli visited St. Louis, but did not find the Bishop. "On my return," he writes, "I stayed at Rock Island to visit the poor Catholics of that place. Mr. Le Claire will probably build a very nice brick church of which I made the plan. Now I send you a short statement of the Catholic church in the Wisconsin Territory and in the neighborhood of Galena. The congregation of Dubuque has much increased this summer; The church, with the assistance of God, will shortly be finished, except the inside plastering and pews. There is a large but humble room under the altar. Times are very difficult, and it will be with the greatest difficulty that I shall get four hundred dollars to continue the building of the wall of Galena church. Protestants, after much preparation, have given up the idea of building their church this year. My occupations do not permit me to attend the building of the church of St. Gabriel at Daven-

---

<sup>12</sup> Mazzuchelli to Rosati, March 4, 1838, original in English in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

port. I made and sent down to that place all necessary plans for a handsome church of brick. M. Le Claire has the means and the generosity, but he is unable to make contracts and does not understand building. He wrote me to go down and have the church built. Now I do not know what to do. We have no opposition here from the Protestants. I shall do my best to prepare a place for the new Bishop."<sup>13</sup>

Iowa as well as Wisconsin was at this time called Wisconsin Territory, and consequently in the diocese of Detroit, whilst Galena was in the diocese of St. Louis. Yet as Father Mazzuchelli held faculties from both, and as Bishop Resé had practically relinquished the whole Mississippi border to Bishop Rosati, the church in Iowa can still be considered a part of the original diocese of St. Louis. Father Mazzuchelli certainly did so regard it. In speaking of Rock Island the missionary meant Davenport, as appears from the following passage of Father Mazzuchelli Memoirs:

"Among the most beautiful and charming sites on the western bank of the Mississippi is that one opposite the famous Rock Island, more than a hundred miles from Dubuque down the river. Nature itself seems to have shaped this regular verdant slope, girdled and shielded by hills, that man might raise a city there. A certain Antoine LeClaire, a devout Catholic, noted no less for his integrity than for his wealth, for many years had his happy home there, alone with his wife, and held his estate of a square mile along the river. This had been presented him as a free gift by the tribes of the Sacs and Foxes in their gratitude toward their faithful friend and interpreter and beneficent adviser on the occasion of the ceding of that section to the United States Government. It was in 1836 that Mr. LeClaire began to convert his estate into a city, which he named Davenport. His faith did not let him forget the cause of Religion: for in the city he was planning, he donated a square in an advantageous position for the erection of a church. The city sprang up as by magic and expanding beyond the confines of LeClaire's estate became the center of trade for the southern part of Iowa."<sup>14</sup>

After hesitating a while Father Mazzuchelli came to the assistance of Mr. LeClaire, the principal proprietor of Davenport, and in April 1831 laid the first stone of the church which was called St. Gabriel's. The first bricks manufactured in the place were used in the construction of the building which was only forty by twenty-five and built with two stories, so as to accomodate on the lower floor the priest who was to make his home there. Thus far the account given of the begin-

---

<sup>13</sup> Mazzuchelli to Rosati, April 16, 1837, Archives.

<sup>14</sup> Memoirs, p. 190.

nings of Davenport, now an episcopal see. Up to this time Father Mazzuchelli, had built two churches, in places where no church had ever existed, Dubuque and Galena, and had named them for two of the three great archangels whose names and deeds are recorded in Sacred Scripture, St. Raphael and St. Michael. It was his wish to dedicate the Church of Davenport to the third Archangel St. Gabriel: but the wish of the founder Antoine LeClaire prevailed, and the Church of Davenport bears the title of St. Anthony.

## CHAPTER 20

### FATHER MAZZUCHELLI AND THE CHURCH OF GALENA

On the 22nd of April, 1837, the Fathers of the Third Provincial Council of Baltimore, at the request of Bishop Rosati, petitioned the Holy Father, Pope Gregory XVI, that Dubuque be made an episcopal see, having for its diocese all that portion of the Territory of Wisconsin which lies between the Mississippi River and the east bank of the Missouri. In an Apostolical Brief of July 28th, of the same year, the Holy Father appointed Very Rev. Mathias Loras, then Vicar-General of Mobile, as Bishop of Dubuque. On December 10th, Dr. Loras was consecrated by Bishop Michael Portier in the Cathedral of Mobile, Alabama. Father Mazzuchelli was at once appointed Vicar-General of the new diocese, yet remained attached to St. Louis on account of his pastorship of Galena. Bishop Rosati conferred on him the title and power of a Pro-Vicar-General. As the building operations on the Church of St. Michael were still in progress it was but natural that he who began the work should also complete it. On September 1st, 1837, he wrote to Bishop Rosati:

“I have already done all that was possible for me to do concerning the welfare of religion in this country. The church of Dubuque is worthy of being a cathedral. I have obtained the claims of about three acres of land joined to the lot of the church. The commissioners have not yet begun to examine the claims of Dubuque, and as a consequence, the claim of the year 1834 is still in statu quo. I wrote some months ago to your Grace, telling you that the deed to the church of Galena was given to the Bishop, and on account of many difficulties with the trustees, I did not have sufficient money to settle up. Mr. Dowling of Galena gave me \$250.00 for the Sisters of Charity. But this man has not yet received one cent from the executors of Mr. Gray. On the 28th of the past month I finally accomplished my desire and I paid for the land of the church of Galena, \$615.00; the title I had from the trustees is given to your Grace. 117 feet are being used for a church, and 100 feet is for the Sisters of Charity. All this was done by Divine Providence in a time when money was scarce, and then under many difficulties caused by perverse men, have also paid 159 dollars for lumber, and there is left in the treasury of the church of Galena 141 dollars. Divine Providence will also assist me to build a small house for the resident priest. It is almost impossible for a priest to stay at Galena under the present circumstances. The papers of Dubuque and Galena will shortly give a correct account of the money received and spent, to which will be added a sufficient explanation. I leave this morn-

ing for a mission on the east side of Big River, about 60 miles away from here. I hope that the Bishop of this place (Loras) will come before winter, that he will find a nice room prepared for him under the sanctuary of the church of Dubuque."<sup>1</sup>

On September 10th, after his arrival from his missionary trip in Wisconsin he reports: "I arrived yesterday from the country. I have obtained a good lot in the town of Mineral Point, the most important place in the interior of the Territory: also a house and four acres in a country place fifteen miles from Galena. There is a good promise of a lot in the town of Madison, the Capital of the Territory. The deeds will shortly be made, and I should like to know to whom I ought to have them made. Everything has to be done in this territory, great exertions are indispensable. Protestants are not in the way of doing much. If we are active and good, everything must turn in our favor."<sup>2</sup> From October 10th, to October 14th, Father Mazzuchelli was in St. Louis, but failed to see the Bishop, who was at the Seminary of St. Mary's of the Barrens. He is kept busy in putting everything in good order at Dubuque and Galena for the reception of Bishop Loras.

"The difficulties," he writes, "that I have to overcome with the government committee, now in session at Dubuque on account of the land given by the agent are very great, and are caused by some rich and powerful Americans who do not keep their promises. It would be of the greatest help to have an American priest here for a few days, he would be able to lessen the opposition. I am very uneasy about these affairs, the loss and the gain are of great value. I need money to employ two lawyers, and I hope that Providence will give it to me. Today I leave for my mission. The water of the Mississippi is very high, but with the grace of God I will arrive at the mission in three days. I have asked (Rev.) Mr. Jameson to visit my place, and he replied that he would come with much pleasure, if your Grace grants him the permission."<sup>3</sup> Bishop Rosati sent the missionary a hearty invitation to come to the Barrens for the consecration of the Church of St. Marys, and also the appointment as Pro-Vicar-General. Father Mazzuchelli answers:

"A few days ago I received the instructions in which you gave me the precise information concerning the limits of the new diocese. Last year I had sent to Bishop Resé a description of the new diocese according to my ideas, hoping that he would present it to the Fathers of the Council; but now that all has been settled by the authority of the Church, it is useless to speak about it any more. As regards the faculty of Pro-Vicar-General, I wish you to know that it was my inten-

1 Mazzuchelli to Rosati, September 1, 1837, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

2 Mazzuchelli to Rosati, September 10, 1837, Archives.

3 Mazzuchelli to Rosati, October 14, 1837, Archives.

tion not to accept any dignity of such nature, but accidentally your letter fell into the hands of a man that knows a little Latin and, having seen the contents of it, he made them known to my friends. Hence it would not be prudent to reject the faculty. It was my purpose to do nothing more to the church of Dubuque, hoping that the Bishop would arrive in the month of May. Now being informed that he will not be in his diocese until the month of November, it puts me into many difficulties to finish the church before he comes. Yet I hope with the Grace of God to have the church of St. Raphael prepared for the consecration next September, but it will be necessary for me to have a priest here after Easter. I hope that your Paternity will be able to send one of those priests now in your diocese. The parish of Galena in the State of Illinois contains about 400 Catholics. Many of the Wisconsin territory consider Galena their parish, hence the reason why I have written about 600. Galena is about 6 miles from the Wisconsin territory.”<sup>4</sup>

“I have received two letters from Bishop Loras. He wrote the second letter from Havre in which he tells me to rent a house, as he is to be in Dubuque about All Saints. Last month I took a house and paid the rent for a month, and I bought a bed with other things. I am not disposed to make any debts for the Bishop, because a fatal experience has taught me not to trust the future. If he does not arrive before the middle of this month, I will give up the house which costs 25 dollars a month. Everything is dear in this place. Circumstances are such in Dubuque that the Bishop will be obliged to take care of his own cooking. Monseigneur Loras will find in my insignificant person a most humble and most faithful servant. With the grace of God I hope to make my home with Bishop Miles towards the end of next year.”<sup>5</sup>

After his consecration, December 10th, 1837, Bishop Loras undertook a journey to France and Italy for the purpose of gaining priests and students, and collecting funds for his poor diocese. He returned to this country, bringing with him two priests, Joseph Cretin<sup>6</sup> and J. A. M. Pelamourgues and four subdeacons, August Ravoux, Renigius Petiot, Luciene Galtier and J. Causse. The four students and Father Pelamourgues were left at St. Marys Seminary, Baltimore, whilst the Bishop and Father Cretin took their way to St. Louis by the Ohio River where he arrived, December 3rd, 1838. Here he was detained the entire winter, as navigation on the river was blocked by the masses of ice coming down its majestic current. Father Mazzuchelli left Galena on March 19th, 1838, by the first steamboat, to bring

---

<sup>4</sup> Mazzuchelli to Rosati, March 4, 1838, Archives.

<sup>5</sup> Mazzuchelli to Rosati, December 3, 1838.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Cretin became Bishop of St. Paul in 1850. Father Pelamourgues is said to have declined the honor. Cf. Kempker, J. F., in “Annals of Iowa,” p. 120.

his Bishop to the episcopal city of Dubuque. On the 21st day of April, the prelate took possession of his Cathedral. On the 28th day of April Bishop Loras officiated in the Church of Galena. It was a great event in the town that had never before been visited by a Bishop.

For sixteen months Vicar-General Mazzuchelli had labored incessantly in preparing the diocese for its Bishop. He was as yet its only priest, and the burden was pressing very heavily on his strength of body and mind. On a former occasion Father Mazzuchelli had asked for an assistant: this request was now to be gratified, but in a manner not altogether satisfactory to the old missionary, who wrote Bishop Rosati:

"The Rev. Mr. Lee arrived in Dubuque when Bishop Loras was still absent on a visit to St. Peter and Prairie du Chien. I advised him to remain in Dubuque last Sunday, while I would go to Galena to prepare everything for his reception. As the people of this place do not like a change of clergyman and felt quite displeased at the idea of it, so I deemed it more prudent to tell the congregation that the Rev. Lee was sent up by you to be an assistant to me in his mission, as I was about to visit many other places; in this way they were sufficiently satisfied. Mr. Philip Barry will board him, and there he will be kept away from any place where his countrymen might be an occasion of evil to him. I left for his use all those conveniences I have procured heretofore, and if he does well, before winter he will be better fixed and liked by the inhabitants. Should he taste any liquor he is a gone man in this place. I shall continue to be responsible for all things belonging to the finishing of the church."

Poor Father Constantine Lee did not last long at Galena. Undoubtedly a man of talent and capable of doing good work among his countrymen, he spoilt all by his lack of self-restraint. On September 13th, three months after his coming to Galena, he wrote a long rambling letter to Bishop Rosati, full of self-accusations and bitter complaints. We will give all the items of historical interest scattered through the five pages: leaving the rest to the oblivion it deserves.

"I am always at Bishop Loras' command whenever he requires my services. I preached the Consecration sermon of the Cathedral. The Bishop preached on Friday the day following. On Saturday I preached the funeral oration of Bishop Bruté, and the same day returned to my congregation in Galena. On Monday I attended a sick call in the country. On Tuesday I commenced collecting for the new church and, notwithstanding a sick-call of twenty-two miles, I collected on Tuesday and Wednesday in paid money between three and four hundred dollars. I went to the homes of the people and found them generous indeed, no one refusing out of all I called upon, but four.

---

7 Mazzuchelli to Rosati, July 23, 1839, Archives.

When I got their names I would not leave the house until they had paid the money which they did freely, when they saw that I made it a rule. This small sum encouraged the workmen to proceed on Thursday. I was then obliged to ride thirty-eight miles under the heat of the sun to attend a sick-call, and the next day I was thrown down with bilious fever, from the effects of which I have not as yet recovered.... I have every reason to believe that the great majority of the congregation are both very ignorant of and very careless in the practice of their religion. If it pleases Almighty God to restore me to my former strength, I intend to give them a retreat, and I have every reason to think that Bishop Loras will assist me. I know that it is impossible for you to come here this season. I will do all in my power to be ready for you next May. By that time I hope to have 150 communicants ready for Confirmation, and the church ready for consecration.... I wish to inform you as to the present state of the new church of Galena. I do not know the exact figures, but I know that the church is deeply plunged in debt. Mr. Mazzuchelli told me that he was giving the pews as security, and that he would not go to any one to collect a dollar. The church is neither ceiled or plastered, a few crazy old boards supply the place of an altar, and nothing but the stones and lime surround it... The workmen are now hurrying up the pews in order to sell them to the parishioners. For my part I have no more authority regarding the affairs of the church, than if you had never appointed me. No doubt, Mr. Mazzuchelli is an excellent man, but he has by far too many irons in the fire in the Diocese of Dubuque to bestow much attention here. Besides, the orders of Mr. Mazzuchelli differ so widely from your instructions that I cannot, in conscience, obey him. On my arrival he told me that there was no support for me here, but that I might take my meals wherever I could get them. I told him that was contrary to your orders... But he could make no other arrangement. So dire necessity obliged me to do what I never had done before. Many days have I remained in my lonely habitation without tasting a morsel, ashamed to go to any one's house to look for a meal.... I was told that the people expected that I would eat in one house, sleep in another, just as it might happen, like Mr. Mazzuchelli. I take the Sunday collection which amounts to five or six dollars, but this is a very small item when everything is so extravagantly high. As to the other charges, i. e., baptisms, marriages, funerals, etc., they are not worth speaking of... My furniture in the old chapel where I live, is a bed, three chairs, a table large enough to hold my writing materials. I have no knife, fork, spoon or plate, but sooner than go to Mr. Major Barry's or any other place to get my victuals for nothing, I will buy a small cooking-stove and cook for myself as well as I can. The number of Catholic souls here, in town and country, of age, if instructed to approach the holy sacraments is, as near as I can say, about

five hundred. The children who are numerous, are extremely ignorant. I have made it my chief object every Sunday to represent to the Catholic parents the sin they were guilty of in allowing their children to grow up in ignorance of the very principle of religion. I have succeeded in bringing together a great number, but I must use very great exertions with them, before they will be fit for the sacrament of confirmation. There is a pious widow here who teaches the Catholic school and helps to instruct the children in Catholic doctrine. She is a convert, her name is Mrs. Farrar. She is rich, and built a fine school-house on one of her lots, expecting that two Sisters of Charity would come and live with her, to teach in the Catholic school. She would give the house and lot.

There are by far better prospects for the Sisters here than in Dubuque, and I think that, if the grand prospect be lost sight of, it may be long ere another present itself."<sup>8</sup>

And now having viewed conditions and prospects of the northernmost missions under Bishop Rosati's rule, through eyes somewhat dimmed and blurred by faults and misfortunes, let us listen to Father Mazzuchelli's final message to the beloved Bishop of St. Louis:

"Having been the pastor of Galena for four years past, and being now almost unable to combine my various duties in the Iowa Territory with the care of this place, I deem it necessary to write to you a few lines on this subject. I do sincerely regret that the Rev. C. Lee was not qualified for this parish, and that he has confirmed the people in their unfavorable opinion of Irish Priests. Our church and popularity here, being built upon zeal, disinterestedness and piety, nothing less is required in a clergyman to do good here, at least for a year or two longer, when everything will be completed. There is no doubt that, if this parish is well conducted, it will in two years be one of the most conspicuous of Illinois, and will much assist the bishop of the State. The annual rent of fifty-six pews amounts to over fourteen hundred dollars, the collections on Sunday to over three hundred dollars. All this money is now given for the building of the church which I hope to finish next year. So I take the liberty to advise you, my most esteemed Bishop, to send to Galena a pious disinterested priest. If he is anxious, and the people are satisfied, I will give up to him forever all the credits, debts and cares of the church. Should this not please you or him, I will continue to do as I have done, and let him have all the private contributions; and if this is not satisfactory, I will provide house, table and clothes and any other thing he should be in need of, provided he gives to the church treasury all that he shall receive in the parish. But aware of your many difficulties I dare to suggest to you another plan, and this is to let the Bishop of Dubuque have full

---

<sup>8</sup> Lee to Rosati in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

jurisdiction of the northwest corner of Illinois as long as you will have it yourself. The Bishop of Dubuque can easily send a priest to this place and can come himself with the greatest facility. The people of Galena are now very much attached to Bishop Loras and would be much pleased with the arrangement. Your wisdom and zeal, however, are far superior to my word. Our retreat, which was to begin on the 6th of October, was by the inclemency of the weather, deferred to the 13th, and lasted until the 21st. A great many people were at church every day. One hundred and thirty-eight communions, thirty-six confirmations. My little share of the work was to preach the word, and the superior call of my affectionate Bishop and companion in the missions was to communicate the spirit. I thank God that in all things the wishes of Bishop Loras are never discordant with my nothingness. I was informed, that your Lordship had been ill and felt much pleased when I heard of the recovery.”<sup>9</sup>

The arrangement in regard to Galena suggested by Father Mazzuchelli was accepted by both Bishops. Accordingly we find Bishop Loras and Father Mazzuchelli, officiating at the East side of the River, as delegates of Bishop Rosati. We found two letters of Bishop Loras in our archives, which we will insert here as showing how the transition of Galena, the city that had such a hold on Bishop Rosati, was made from the diocese of St. Louis to that of Chicago.

“What you tell me in your letter of the 23rd, Sept.,” writes Bishop Loras on December 17th, 1839, “That I may regard Galena and its surroundings as forming part of my diocese, causes me pleasure, and I willingly consent to the arrangement on account of the geographical situation of that part of Illinois; nevertheless I fear this new responsibility. I believe, however that I need not do more for the place than I have done so far. I have established myself at Galena since Advent, in the absence of Mr. Mazzuchelli, who is at Burlington, and I fill here, to the best of my power, the office of pastor. I shall pass Christmas here. The people are well disposed. I have daily more than fifty children or adults at my catechism class. On Sundays the church is full to overflowing. The Mass is frequented on work days. I preach here once in my English. Mr. Cretin, who was a little lonesome whilst I was in Dubuque, will have a grand chance to practice his English on young men likewise. I can absent myself freely and this is absolutely necessary, if it were only for the Council, which really cannot be placed later than in Spring. I, at first, thought that it was of little consequence to me to be present, but I can make such good use of the journey that I decided to go. What you have the goodness to tell me about Kentucky, is quite consoling; how I wish to see the worthy Patriarch (Bishop Flaget) at the Council!

---

<sup>9</sup> Mazzuchelli to Rosati, November 6, 1839, Archives.

I am waiting every day for details on the disaster of Mobile. How severely this poor bishop is tried! I am afraid that his poor Cathedral progresses but little. How immensely the loss of Mr. Mauverney is felt; he was the soul of that college. You say that You have lost Mr. Jamison; what will all those good ladies do at St. Louis? As far as I am concerned, I do not think that this is such a great evil. The conduct of Mr. Lee here has raised the repugnance which our good Irish entertain against priests of their own nationality, to the utmost. There is in this, I feel, something providential. Our young men will do very well. I am very insistent on their acquiring the English language and mastering their Theology in Latin. They write to me from Davenport that Mr. Pelamourgues is doing very well, by virtue of his piety, his zeal and his polished manners. He already preaches in English every Sunday. After Christmas I shall push the construction of two churches 20 and 18 miles from Dubuque. God will bless our efforts and our feeble beginnings."<sup>10</sup>

On December 31st, 1839 I arrived from Galena where I spent all Advent and Christmas to my satisfaction. I officiated alone on the holy day of Christmas, but the church was filled four times within 24 hours. At midnight it was crowded, without the least disorder; also at Dubuque. We are more happy here than in the South where there are men who give trouble. Next Sunday I shall ordain my first deacons, and I shall conduct the best one to Galena, where he shall stay and where, from time to time, he shall be replaced . . . I shall go there myself occasionally and shall keep You "au courant" on what is done there. We shall soon need a new church."<sup>11</sup>

The "best one" of the newly ordained priests was Father Remigius Petiot, a native of France. He was sent to Galena shortly after his ordination and for a number of years labored faithfully and successfully in that difficult mission. But as Bishop Rosati left St. Louis on April 27, 1840 to attend the Fourth Provincial Council of Baltimore, and then set sail for Europe, never again to see his diocese, we have no letters from the Rev. Petiot in our archives. As Bishop Loras writes, Galena became practically a part of Dubuque diocese until it passed under the jurisdiction of Chicago in 1844.

Three great States of the Mississippi Valley, Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois have a special claim to the renown of Father Samuel Mazzuchelli: Within their precincts his life-work was accomplished, and in their historic pages his memory is enshrined. Cyrenus Cole, in his History of Iowa, designates him as "a man of the highest education and refinement" and "one of the most remarkable men connected with the early church history of Iowa." In addition he declares: "The story

<sup>10</sup> Loras to Rosati, December 17, 1839, Archives.

<sup>11</sup> Loras to Rosati, December 31, 1839, Archives.

of Father Mazzuchelli's work in Iowa reads like a romance. He went to many places and he labored unceasingly. He traveled on foot and on horseback, in ox-wagons and on boats. A stranger in a strange land, he slept on the floors of cabins and he ate often the food of savages. In his own land he might have been any one of many things, for he had the gifts of the musician, the sculptor, and the painter, and his talents as an architect are undoubtedly expressed in the old capitol at Iowa City. As a writer he contributed much to the history of the upper Mississippi Valley. His 'Memorie Istoriche' was written in Italian after his return to his native country. Its simple and graceful diction could not be lost even in translation."<sup>12</sup> Wisconsin eagerly lays claim to a share in his glory, as is evidenced by the eloquent manner in which Quaife's History of Wisconsin speaks of him: "A voice crying in the spiritual wilderness of Wisconsin in the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century, its mellow tones with soft Italian accent bringing to the aborigines with special unction and sweetness the compelling story of the Savior's love—such was the voice of the pioneer Dominican missionary of our state, the Rev. Samuel Charles Mazzuchelli. As a precursor of the later heralds of the Gospel and peer among the greatest of them, he strove with high heroism to level the mountains of ignorance and vice and make straight the crooked paths of superstition and unbelief. A unique and impressive story his life history presents: Unique in the prompting that bade him exchange affluence and congenial society in a great city for poverty, solitude and the companionship of Indians; unique in the superior gifts of mind and heart which as a lone young priest he brought to the herculean task of evangelization in the Wisconsin wilds of 1830; unique in the variety of events and activities that meant so substantial and permanent a contribution toward our religious and educational development."<sup>13</sup>

And lastly a voice from Illinois chimes in:

"He built a church at Galena and secured extensive grounds for convent and graveyard purposes; He was never known to miss an appointment in the duties of his sacred ministry. Rain, hail, or sunshine, whether the thermometer stood at ninety degrees above or thirty degrees below zero, he was always present at the appointed hour."<sup>14</sup>

But the diocese of St. Louis, extending at the time to Father Mazzuchelli's high-tide of activity, has the highest claim to his glory, as that of one of her apostolic men laboring, watching and praying on her northeastern frontier.

<sup>12</sup> Cyrenus Cole, "History of Iowa."

<sup>13</sup> Quaife, Milo, Milton, "History of Wisconsin."

<sup>14</sup> Quaife, *ibidem*. The three last quotations are derived from Joseph Gurn's excellent article on "A Builder of the West," in "Columbia," for January, 1928.

## CHAPTER 21

### CATHOLIC BEGINNINGS OF KANSAS CITY

The Concordat between the Bishop of Louisiana and the Society of Jesus, in virtue of which the entire territory of the diocese along the Missouri River was assigned to the Jesuits, was never approved by the Holy See and consequently was binding on both parties only in as far as they mutually agreed as to the various clauses. The clause regarding the Jesuits exclusive jurisdiction proved inoperative on account of the small number of available missionaries on part of the Jesuits, and the unexpected rapid growth of Catholic settlements clamoring for priests. As the demand by far exceeded the supply, Bishop Rosati felt obliged to make use of his undoubted right to send diocesan priests into what was considered Jesuit territory, and the Jesuits gladly accepted their cooperation. The first, and most notable evangelizing effort along the Missouri River, after the brief visit of Father Lutz to Kawsmouth, the future Kansas City, was the pastorate of Father Benedict Roux from 1833 to 1835. With Father Roux<sup>1</sup> the ecclesiastical history of Kansas City properly begins; as he was the first resident priest of the entire region around the junction of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers. Father Roux, together with Father Saint Cyr and three other missionaries had been sent to St. Louis in 1831, by the Association for the Propagation of the Faith. The young and energetic priest was assigned to the Cathedral. His great ambition was to become proficient in the English language: he spent a part of the year 1833 with private families in Dardenne and St. Charles in order to practice the vernacular. His desire was to go to the Far West among the Indians and the frontiersmen. In this purpose he had a competitor in the person of Father Condamine, the pastor of Kaskaskia, who asked Father Roux to take Kaskaskia and let him go to the Indians. Father Roux declined the offer and insisted that his desire to become an Indian Missionary had brought him to America. Another attempt at an Osage mission after the failure of Father Lutz, proposed to Bishop Rosati by Father Roux, was considered hopeless: but the persistent requests of Father Roux attained this much, that the Bishop, in the Fall of 1833, appointed him missionary priest to the Catholics along the Missouri frontier.

---

<sup>1</sup> The only full account of the life and labors of Father Benedict Roux is that of Father Gilbert J. Garraghan, S. J., contained in Chapters III and IV of his splendid volumes, "Catholic Beginnings of Kansas City," Chicago, 1920. The letters of Father Roux are the main sources of this narrative.

Arriving in his new field of labor the missionary then visited the various settlements of which Liberty in Clay County was the most considerable. At Independence there were but two Catholic families. On November 14th, he arrived on the site of Kansas City. The Chouteaus, Cyprian and Francis Gesseau, were the principal traders on both sides of the border. It was in Cyprian Chouteau's hospitable house on the south side of the Kaw, that Father Roux found a temporary home and chapel. A tract of forty acres was assured to the priest that would build a church in the place. Financial help would also be provided. Father Roux already dreamt of a school and Sisters' Convent. There were only a dozen Catholic families in all Jackson County, but great numbers were "preparing to flock here," as Father Roux wrote to the Bishop. Then the two establishments he contemplated were "at the very door of the Indian country." He had been received by the Potawatomi and Kickapoos, as an angel sent from Heaven. "They are truly Catholics in desire," and their life is "a perfect image of that of the Christians of the primitive church." "I should never finish" he concludes, "were I to tell you all the edifying things I saw among them." The romantic spirit was still strong in Father Roux. The Kickapoo prophet Kenekuk was not present when Father Roux addressed the Kickapoo chiefs and their tribesmen, but he sent his "profession of faith" which raised high hopes in the fervent soul of the missionary.

The town of Liberty, which also bore the nickname "*Vide Poche*," Empty Pocket, with its six hundred people, was intended by Father Roux as the second missionary establishment. But the place of his main activities was Chouteau's Trading Post at Kawsmouth, successively called the Church of Mr. Chouteau, then the town of Kansas, Westport and at last Kansas City. It was here that Father Roux held services for the first time on Christmas day 1833, preaching in French and English, without saying Mass, as the meeting was held in the home of a Protestant.<sup>2</sup>

Father Roux's efforts to found an institution of the Nuns of the Sacred Heart or of the Sisters of Charity in the frontier settlement on the Kaw proved unavailing: the difficulty of finding an adequate support for them seemed insurmountable.

Early in 1834 the French parishioners of Father Roux at the mouth of the Kaw secured a house to be used as a temporary church and another to serve as the pastor's residence. Services were held for the first time on Sexagesima Sunday 1835, but mass was not celebrated publicly until Easter Sunday. As late as March 11th, 1834, the good

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Father Benedict Roux' first and second letters, "From the Mouth of the Kansas River," November 24, 1833 and March 11, 1834, printed in Garraghan, op. cit., pp. 43, 48 and 50.

but rather scrupulous Father had not said mass, because for the first four months he "did not have the least little place respectable enough for an action so august and holy." The reason given for omitting mass the rest of the time is still less acceptable: the danger to his health owing to the distance from his residence to the church, and the difficulty of getting something to eat after his long fast. It is plain, the young missionary was not as yet sufficiently seasoned to be of much use among the hardy frontiersmen and Indians. Father Roux's mind was more esthetic than ascetic. "A very pretty little altar . . . with a touch of dainty elegance and four chandeliers as bright as gold" consoled him Sunday after Sunday for the lack of the holy sacrifice.

But from Easter Sunday on, this seeming lethargy was shaken off. He acquired forty acres of land within the present site of Kansas City, for a consideration of six dollars on which he proposed to build the log church to be dedicated to St. Francis Regis. From his temporary home he visited the little towns and settlement of the neighborhood preaching everywhere in English and French, baptizing and saying mass. The hope of getting the Sisters of Charity for the town of Liberty buoys him up. At last he succeeds in having a house built for his residence on his forty-acre lot at Kawsmouth. In the fall of 1834 he hopes to have his Church started. "It all depends on You," he writes to the Bishop, "by sending me the hundred dollars You subscribed." Bishop Rosati sent his contribution and, at the same time offered to send a colony of Sisters of St. Joseph, who were then expected from France. But Father Roux felt obliged to decline the offer, as the Sisters did not speak English, and as no support could be given them amid the poverty of his surroundings. The parishioners of Father Roux were, for the most part, rough voyagers and trappers, thoughtless of tomorrow and careless of eternity. Besides they were engaged in a bitter feud with the Mormons, who then infested Jackson County. The few American Catholics from Kentucky were the priest's great consolation through their piety and regularity of life.

Father Roux' projected Church was still a-building, in spite of Bishop Rosati's generous contribution: Mass was still said in the rented chapel two miles from his home. Sickness overtook the pastor, and the sheep strayed hither and thither in the wilderness. The Catholics of his Congregation were indeed "incapable of supporting a priest decently, being too few in number," and we might add, too shiftless in character. "Yet," he exclaimed, "even though I had nothing but corn-bread to eat, I will not abandon them." Either to die or Deo adjuvante, to succeed, such is the determination I have taken." As to his building projects they had all failed, because the good old Mr. Bouvet in whom he had put all his trust, proved to

be incapable of taking them in hand and expediting the erection of the buildings in question.”<sup>3</sup>

Father Roux’s ministry at “the Mouth of the Kansas River” was now drawing to a close. Bishop Rosati expressed his intention of sending him to Kaskaskia, and the rumor reached the good Father’s ear.

“I am perfectly indifferent,” he wrote to his Bishop on February 12th, 1835, “to go wherever it will please you, and to stay wherever it will please you, here even, if you think it best. I only pray you to let me know your intentions in this matter as soon as possible, so that I may know on whom to rely in regard to several things. I am very anxious to go down to St. Louis and spend some days in retreat; for it seems an age since I have had the happiness of approaching the tribunal of penance. In the meantime kindly give me some of your excellent prayers.”<sup>4</sup>

Towards the end of April he started for St. Louis and on May 11th, expressed his regrets at being obliged to leave the forlorn people of the Missouri frontier. “I experience intolerable pain to think that I must part from those poor sheep which I have brought, though in truth with difficulty, to the Lord’s fold; docile now to the voice of their pastor, they were coming regularly on fixed days to slake their thirst in the waters of the spring *salientis usque an vitam aeternam*. Many among them, it is true, were still far astray on the paths of perdition; but they were beginning to make their bleatings heard, announcing thereby their desire to return to wholesome and abundant pastures.”<sup>5</sup>

No doubt, Father Roux was sincere in making this plaintive retraction of what he had said in former letters. And that this more cheerful outlook really had better justification, than the gloomier one of desponding days, is evident from the results attained within the brief period of eighteen months.

“I have at Independence or in its vicinity, only some twenty Catholic families, French, American, Indian. And yet nineteen persons have fulfilled their Easter duty, while ten others presented themselves at the sacred tribunal for this purpose. I heard the confession of all the Catholic children, over nine years. Six made their first communion on Easter Day. From June 4, 1834, to April 26, 1835, I baptized nineteen persons, three of whom were of advanced age. Many

---

<sup>3</sup> Jean B. Bouvet, a layman, upon whose mechanical abilities Father Roux had set great hopes, in regard to the erection of the proposed church.

<sup>4</sup> Roux to Rosati, February 12, 1835, Archives.

<sup>5</sup> Roux to Rosati, May 11, 1835, Archives.

Americans were pleased to come and listen to my poor English. Several were preparing to receive baptism on my return to the mouth of the Kansas River. A subscription has been taken up amounting to nearly \$400 towards building a church and presbytery of nicely squared logs. Both buildings, according to the contract, must be delivered in August of this year. Moreover, the population of the eastern states is shifting westward in large numbers. Within a few years Jackson County will be one of the most populous of the State of Missouri. This Catholic congregation is small indeed; still there is good to be done there, and a great deal to put up with, and such ought to be the portion of a priest who wishes to walk in the footsteps of the Great Pastor of sheep. If you are willing, Monseigneur, to send me back there, I will return with great pleasure; if, on the contrary, it is your intention to place me elsewhere, I will also with great pleasure undertake myself to whatever post you or your Vicar-General will assign me . . . ”<sup>6</sup>

Bishop Rosati thought, and justly so, that Father Roux would accomplish more good and have more peace of mind in a parish of older date and higher culture and accordingly appointed him pastor of Kaskaskia. (July 21st.) in place of Father Condamine, who was to take charge of the missions of Northern Illinois. The old church of the Immaculate Conception at Kaskaskia had been, for a long time, in a dilapidated condition, partly through the great earthquake of 1813, partly through simple neglect. For as sloth is the most destructive force in regard to spiritual life, so neglect is the silent, slow, yet surest destroyer of material things. Kaskaskia had full experience of this truth in its decline and fall. The church built to stand for ages, at last had to be wrecked lest it bury the Congregation under its ruins. A church of wood replaced the stone structure. The convent and school of the Visitation Nuns also fell under Father Roux's spiritual care, and on November 30th, 1837, he resigned the parish and retained spiritual charge of the Convent. In 1844, Father Roux was stationed at the Cathedral, where he remained until 1846. It is said that he then returned to France.

The sum of Father Benedict Roux's achievements in the missionary and pastoral fields does not loom very large: yet he deserves honorable mention as the founder of the first Congregation on the site of one of our great episcopal cities. Besides, the work he did accomplish on the western frontier of civilization, had to be done in preparation for the far greater results attained by his successor. Pioneering

---

<sup>6</sup> Roux to Rosati, May 11, 1835. Archives.

is always an ungrateful task and it usually claims the life, or at least, the health of the pioneer. "Father Roux was a man of sincere personal piety and exemplary integrity of life" as Father Garraghan sums up his character, "a stickler for all that pertained to the accuracy and even splendor of church-ceremonial. In zeal for souls, he surely was not lacking."<sup>7</sup> A characteristic touch is added to this sketch of a good and earnest though not successful priest by one of Kansas City's pioneers, who said: "he was a little smooth-shaven Frenchman, slight of build and delicate. That is all we know about him. But he did good work."<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Garraghan, *op. cit.*, p. 83 and 84.

<sup>8</sup> A brief chronicle of Kaskaskia compiled by Father Roux, in 1839, may be found in "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," October, 1918.

## FATHER BRICKWEDDE OF QUINCY

By the Bull of Pope Gregory XVI, 1834, the western half of Illinois became an integral part of the diocese of St. Louis, whilst the eastern portion with Chicago was attached to the diocese of Vincennes. Father Saint Cyr was withdrawn from his outpost on Lake Michigan and in response to the repeated request of Father Lefevere, appointed to Quincy and the other Illinois missions in the vicinity, which had been formed by that ubiquitous missionary. It was high time that something be done on a larger scale for these and other very promising missions in the interior of the State. In 1837 the church stood firmly rooted on the banks of the Mississippi from St. Louis to Galena, Dubuque and Prairie du Chien, and now began to branch out east and west, but naturally with greater vigor along the chief tributary of the Mississippi above its confluence with the Missouri, the haunted stream of Indian legend and Christian tradition, the far-famed Illinois of Father Marquette's eulogy: "We had seen nothing like this view for fertility of the land its prairies, woods, wild cattle, stag, deer, wild cats, swans, ducks, parrots and even beaver; its many lakes and rivers. That on which we sailed is broad and deep and gentle for sixty-five leagues."<sup>1</sup>

This beautiful and diversified country running diagonally through the heart of Illinois, from the neighborhood of St. Louis towards Chicago, was being rapidly reclaimed from the state of wild nature. From 1833 on, Father Lefevere had visited the scattered settlements as far east as Sangamon County. But now the increase in population required a concerted movement of numerous soldiers of the Cross to do battle with the enemy, and to conquer the land for Christ. In 1837, Father Lefevere is succeeded in Quincy by Father August F. Brickwedde; in Fountain Green, and in the stations around the headwaters of Crooked Creek, by Father Saint Cyr; in Springfield, a year and a half later, by George A. Hamilton, whilst the English-speaking people of Quincy received their own pastor in the person of Father Hilary Tucker. In 1838, the Vincentian Fathers J. B. Raho and Aloysius Parodi entered upon their most fruitful labors in and around La Salle County, whilst Alton, having been visited by Father E. Debruyne, S.J., since 1836, received its first resident priest Father James Flynn, in February 1838. Father Lefevere had made a special

---

<sup>1</sup> Shea, "Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley," 2nd Ed., p. 54.

plea to the Bishop for Quincy, his first mission in Illinois and had been promised as assistant, Father Saint Cyr of Chicago. Father Lefevere expressed his great joy and gratitude, especially as Father Saint Cyr was reported to be a fair German scholar. For more than half of the Catholics of Quincy were German. In fact Bishop Rosati had been asked to send the only German priests he then had, Father Lutz or Father Helias, S.J., to Quincy, at least two or three times a year. Father Saint Cyr received his appointment to Quincy, June 12th, 1837, and was about to start for his new and promising field, when something unforeseen occurred that changed Bishop Rosati's plans. A large congregation of German Catholic emigrants, accompanied by their priest, August Florentius Brickwedde, arrived in St. Louis, intent upon a settlement somewhere in the wilds of Missouri or Illinois.

Augustus Florentius Brickwedde was born June 24, 1805, at Fuerstenau; Kingdom of Hanover, diocese of Osnabrueck. He was descended from a distinguished family of jurists; his Father, an able counselor at law, held the position of Circuit Judge at Bersenbrueck. Having completed his classical course at Osnabrueck, and his philosophical and theological studies at the universities of Munich and Bonn, young Augustus was ordained priest in the Cathedral of Hildesheim, September 20, 1830. The young curate of five years' experience in the ministry casually hearing of the great need of missionaries in far-away America, especially among the German colonists who were just then beginning to make their numerous settlements in the new world, decided to devote his life and talents to their service. The Bishop of Osnabrück, Dr. Lüpke, gave him his dimissorials and his paternal blessing, and the young enthusiast set out for America in company of a band of German emigrants, in May 1837, arriving in New York, July 4th, of the same year.

When Father Brickwedde arrived in St. Louis, Bishop Rosati was absent from home, and Father Lutz received the stranger as a guest, until the Bishop could dispose of him. Then he wrote a letter communicating the news. Father Lutz seems to have been in constant fear of displeasing the Bishop; and the letter of July 24, bears witness to the fact:

"It appears rather singular," it says "that, just at the time of your absence from home, German priests should happen to arrive. However, though this coincidence may have at times, proven disagreeable to your Reverence, it will not, I hope prove so at present. Perhaps you say, that I have suffered myself to be imposed upon once more. To this I answer: That I shall always invariably follow, and have followed in the present case your precepts, as far as the personal circumstances of the individuals require it. Being aware of your just severity on this point, I was at first inclined not to receive the German Priest at your house; but having examined his papers,

especially his dimissorial letters from his Bishop, the Rev. Dr. Lüpke of Osnabrück, and moreover became acquainted with the particulars relating to his mission hither, I thought it more proper to receive him, than to let him stay out of the house, whilst he has no acquaintances. He appears to be a worthy ecclesiastic, and well disposed to consecrate his labors to the salvation of so many hundreds of his fellow country-men that are scattered all over your diocese. I told him to wait, till you should return and to abstain from celebrating Mass; in short, he approved with his whole heart without the least displeasure, of your measures in relation to the admittance of German priests. You remember, that, a few years ago, I had written a letter to a worthy German priest of the name of Beckmann in Osnabrück, to which letter you deigned to add a few lines. The answer received from the said Revd. gentleman expressed his own wish, yet actual impossibility of doing as he wished, to join your clergy. This priest, therefore, the Revd. August Brickwedde, came, as it were, in the place of the former. He is 32 years old and apparently of a strong constitution. I have to observe, that with regard to the censuras ecclesiasticas, nothing at all is said in his dimissorial letters. The latter amongst other things state, *Dictum Vicarium Augustum Brickwedde, per plures jam annos in animarum cura subsidaria versatum, optime Nobis Commendatum existere, proindeque eundem Reverendis-simis Dnis. in Reg. America Episcopis enixe a nobis commendari.*”

Indeed, Bishop Rosati had received a letter from Bishop Lüpke in regard to the mission and personality of Father Brickwedde, and was well pleased to secure such a helper in his greatest need. For did not Father Lefevere insist that a good part of the congregation of Quincy consisted of Germans, who required the ministry of a German priest. Father Brickwedde was immediately adopted and sent to Quincy for the purpose of founding a German parish, the first national parish in the Mississippi Valley, whilst the English-speaking Catholics of Quincy were to be under the pastoral care of Father Saint Cyr who, however, was to reside at Fountain Green. It is not known whether Father Saint Cyr ever came to Quincy. In his report for 1837, he writes: “I did not include in the number of my parishioners the English Catholics of Quincy, because I thought that Rev. Brickwedde will give their number in his report.”

Father Brickwedde held his first service in the new parish on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Blessed Lady. One of the upper rooms of the dwelling of Adam Schmitt formed the chapel, and the adjoining porch was enclosed to serve as the priest's sitting and sleeping-room. The Parish was dedicated in honor of the Ascension of Our Lord. At the first Mass there were only thirteen persons in attendance, although the congregation numbered more than 170 souls.

There were only two baptisms and four burials in all Adams County from August 15, to December 31, 1837. In January 1839, the pastor writes that, since Pentecost, the services have been held in his own house. On account of the dull times the people could not build the church, but they were hopeful of building one within the year. As to the spiritual progress of his people, Father Brickwedde has only words of praise.

It is greatly to the credit of this German pastor of souls that one of his first undertakings at Quincy, was to establish a school for the lambs of his flock. School was taught in Father Brickwedde's own building, which also contained the church and priest's residence. There were fourteen boys and ten girls in attendance the first year.

Father Brickwedde's report, dated April 22nd, 1839, contains a few more items of interest: Mass is still celebrated in the private house of the pastor, but the place (a room 28x18 feet) cannot contain the multitude. There is no farm attached to the parish, as the good father had been accustomed to find in his native land; there are no resources, the pastor lives on his own private fortune. Lately a Mr. Whitney donated to the Bishop a lot of ground on Main and Eighth Streets, suitable for the erection of a Church, a hundred feet long and forty wide. For the building of the Church about \$900 have been subscribed, either in money or in labor. There are now 241 German Catholics in the county and about 50 speaking the English language, forming a rather floating population. Every Sunday there is High Mass and a Sermon in the German language; at 2 o'clock in the afternoon Catechism instruction for the children and the Rosary or some other popular devotion.

In the course of his ministry Father Brickwedde extended his efforts to the German settlements across the River in Iowa Territory. There were many German Catholics in Lee County. At Fort Madison he said Mass in the log-cabin of J. H. Dingman. Thence he proceeded Sugar Creek, where he held divine service for the first time on May 11th, 1838, in the newly erected barn of John Henry Kempker. In the summer of the same year he built a little Church on the land of Henry Holtkamp, which was dedicated to St. James. At Sugar Creek the congregation consisted of fifty-four persons, all Germans, and had thirty-four Easter-Communicants. Father Brickwedde's visit to West Point occurred on April 17th, 1839, two days before the arrival of Bishop Loras in Dubuque.<sup>2</sup>

As Father Saint Cyr, then residing at Fountain Green on Crooked Creek, Illinois, failed to visit the English speaking people of Quincy, they were obliged to attend High Mass at Father Brickwedde's church. But as the good German priest was far from proficient in their

---

<sup>2</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

language, they naturally desired a priest of their own. Accordingly, a lengthy petition was sent to Bishop Rosati on January 29th, 1839: It was signed by J. S. Whitney, and read as follows:

“Rt. Rev. Sir:

“At a meeting of the Catholic congregation in this place, held on the 20th inst., I was directed to communicate to the Bishop of the diocese, its doings, and also some other points relating to this congregation:

“The meeting was held in the building occupied by us at present as a church, and after service was ended. After some discussion of the subject it was thought proper to take up a subscription, to ascertain, what sum could be obtained for building a church here, the ensuing season. Only a small part of the congregation was present, but the sum of \$475.00 was subscribed. On the 27th inst., after service, the further sum of \$75.00 was subscribed, making an aggregate of \$550.00. Sometime last Autumn, the hands then at work on the railroad at this place, by agreement among themselves, advanced one dollar each for the same purpose and paid the money amounting to \$90.00 over to the contractor, who now has the money in his possession. This item, added to the former, makes a total \$640.00. A subscription paper was circulated here a year or two ago for the purpose of raising funds to build a church, but was thought not sufficient. The paper, through carelessness, has been lost; but it is believed that not less than \$200 will be obtained. This added makes \$840.00. We propose to raise the sum of \$1,200.00, thinking that sum will be sufficient to put up a brick building 50 feet long, 30 feet wide and 18 feet high; and enclose it so that it will receive no injury during the winter and complete it next year. Not more than one-third of the congregation has as yet subscribed anything. The ladies of the congregation propose to raise \$100.00 by holding a fair from the sale of sundry articles of their own manufacture. The contractor (Mr. Reilly) on the railroad is of opinion, there will come 300 men next spring to work on the road, who will contribute something toward our proposed undertaking. The known liberality of the Irish character is a sufficient guarantee in this case. If unanimity prevails, there will be no difficulty in the case. Several think it will be expedient to complete the edifice the present year and sell out the pews to defray a part of the expense. I do not believe this will be necessary. If we make the proper efforts, enough will be raised for the purpose, and a sale of the pews might be reserved to raise a fund for the support of the officiating clergyman and for purposes of charity.

As chairman of the meeting of which I have spoken, I was instructed to write this letter; and to say that this congregation is

composed of two classes of persons; one class speaks the English language and the other the German. The Rev. Mr. Brickwedde, who officiates here, gives out all his instructions in the German language. A very considerable portion of the congregation do not understand a word of it, and I am directed to ask if a clergyman, able to speak and preach in the English language, could not be sent here. We have been informed, there is, at this time, a young gentleman, of the name of Hamilton, who might be designated for this place. If so, I am directed to say that a room for his accomodation and a suitable place for him to board, will be ready for him on his arrival. We wish, all of us, however, to be distinctly understood, that by this we impute no blame, we cast no censure on Mr. Brickwedde; we believe him to be an excellent and worthy man. But our desire is to be instructed in our religious duty and that in a language we can understand.

But there is another subject that I am directed to mention, and it seems more proper to do so to our Bishop than to any one else. I cannot speak with entire accuracy, but I think I am not far from it, when I say, there are here 150 persons who have not been to confession for more than 15 months. If a standing rule of the church is violated, it may be asked how can persons confess without a confessor. Mr. Brickwedde cannot understand, unless he is addressed in German. The above persons cannot do so for they cannot speak that language. In this case, if Mr. Hamilton cannot come here, I am directed to propose that some one of the Reverend clergy be selected to come here for a few weeks, or even for a few days, specially to attend to this congregation in the present state of things.

The house we meet in at present, for public worship, will not hold more than one-half of the congregation; and many do not attend for the reason that the house will not hold them. Another reason is that which I have already alluded to, that the instructions, at present, are all in the German language. If we could also have preaching in English we should endeavor to adopt this arrangement, that the Germans should attend the instructions of Mr. Brickwedde, and there are enough of them to fill the house, and on such occasions to give up the house exclusively to them during service: and if we could have preaching in English, we would in turn exclusively occupy the house and there would be enough of us to fill it. This as a temporary arrangement, until we can build a house large enough to hold all, and would be very satisfactory."

After a few irrelevant remarks the writer concludes his petition with these words:

"Our increasing numbers will only make us weak, being like an army without discipline, unless we have the teaching, the instruction and discipline of the church."

A postscript is added by the ladies of the congregation:

“Rt. Rev. Bishop Rosati:

The undersigned respectfully beg leave to add their names in an earnest request that Mr. Hamilton be stationed at Quincy.

Mrs. R. M. Young. Miss Jane Field.

Mrs. Marie Field. Mrs. S. C. Rogers.<sup>3</sup>

This petition is remarkable for more than one reason. The tone is that of a cultured gentleman, and avoids all asperity and mere fault-finding. Yet we cannot believe that Father Brickwedde in 1839, was unable to hear confessions in English, for we have a number of his letters in a kind of English, that is not, indeed, idiomatic, yet would amply suffice for the office of a confessor. Some of these proposed penitents must have been somewhat at fault in declining the services of Father Brickwedde who, by all accounts, was a good zealous priest.

The most remarkable thing in this document is the proposal of separate congregations of English-speaking and German people. Indeed Mr. Whitney of Quincy offered the plan only as a temporary expedient, yet it was, no doubt, the occasion of Bishop Rosati's action in establishing the English speaking parish under Father St. Cyr's successor, Father Hilary Tucker, and the German parish of the Ascension of our Lord under Father Brickwedde. As this is the first known case of such an arrangement, creating parishes on national lines, we must conclude that the movement started, not with the Germans, as is commonly supposed, but rather with the native-born Catholics. The Catholics of Quincy therefore must have the honor as well as the responsibility of having inaugurated a movement that proved to be of incalculable benefit to the Church in this country, saving hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the imminent danger of losing their Catholic faith.

About three months after this petition was sent to Bishop Rosati, Father Brickwedde transmitted his official report on the condition of “The Mission of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ” in Quincy. We will render the original Latin in English and add a few illustrations as the occasion offers. The document is dated: Quincy, 22nd of April 1839:

1. The Mission under the title *Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ* in Quincy, in the State of Illinois, County of Adams, is two hundred miles from St. Louis.

2. Letters can be safely sent by mail to Quincy.

3. This mission has no church of its own, but until now the holy sacrifice of the Mass has been offered up in a room of the house of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Original in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

missionary, Brickwedde, which was blessed in the year 1838, on the Feast of Pentecost; it is of wood, and the outside is painted, and the interior plastered, 28 feet long and 18 feet wide, and cannot hold the multitude of the faithful. There are no bells, no baptismal font, no confessionals. There is a tabernacle in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept. The Registers of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials are properly kept.

4. There is no parochial residence.

5. There is a public cemetery, but it is not blessed.

6. The mission owns no farms or any other real estate. The missionary must live at his own expense and the rare offerings of the faithful. Recently Mr. Whitney gave to the bishop of this territory a site for a church-building to be built of stone, the lot is 100 feet square, and conveniently situated on Main and Eighth Streets. For the building of the church about 900 dollars have been subscribed, partly in labor and partly in money. The deed for the gift will ere long be sent to the Bishop of St. Louis.

7-8. There are 241 Catholic Germans. The English-speaking Catholics number about 50: But the exact number cannot be given, because every day some workmen arrive and others depart.

9. The word of God is preached every Sunday and Holy Day in the German language, and High Mass is sung. On the same days, at two o'clock in the afternoon the children are instructed in Christian Doctrine, after that Vespers are held and the Rosary is recited in public or some other devotion held.

10. There is a Catholic school in Quincy attended by fourteen boys and ten girls. My missionary station in Iowa territory is situated in Lee County, on Sugar Creek. The number of souls there, is 62, all speaking the German language. They have offered six acres of land in a very suitable place for a church, cemetery and priest's residence. They are very anxious for a priest speaking the German language."<sup>4</sup>

This report of Father Brickwedde contains a number of very interesting items. The first church in Quincy has the title of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and is so designated in the records as early as 1836. The name must therefore have been given by the earliest missionary visiting the place, the Rev. Peter Paul Lefevere. It seems probable that Father Lefevere came to Quincy on his great missionary excursion in 1834, on the Feast of the Ascension, and was then moved to designate the new mission by that glorious title. This name is found in all the records and reports until 1848, when for the first time we meet with the title St. Boniface, for what had been

---

<sup>4</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

the mission and parish of the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is plain, however, that not only the present Parish of St. Boniface, but all the churches of Quincy have their origin in the humble mission of Father Brickwedde.

At the time of Father Brickwedde's report, Quincy was a city of about 1800 inhabitants and enjoyed the facilities of the mail-service, two steamers making weekly trips up the Mississippi and touching at Quincy. The house of Father Brickwedde, temporarily used for divine service, was situated on Broadway and Eleventh Street. The extreme poverty of our early western missions is brought before us very vividly by the few words of the missionary: "No bells, no baptismal font, no confessional;" only the tabernacle with our Lord's sweet presence amid all these signs of desolation. But this Divine Presence richly made up for all these privations. Two small rooms adjoining the church were reserved for the missionary. It was the intention of Father Brickwedde to build the new church spoken of in the petition sent to Bishop Rosati, on the lot adjoining the temporary place of worship, and then to use the old building as a parish residence. But the plan was not carried out, as the location seemed unsuitable for church purposes, and Mr. Whitney had given a new site on Main and Eighth Streets. When Father Hilary Tucker arrived to take charge of the English-speaking Catholics of Quincy, about May 1839, he claimed the donation of Mr. Whitney for his congregation and started to build his church upon it. The German Catholics, however, bought a plot of ground on Seventh Street. The contract was closed June 17, 1839, and preparations for building a church were immediately begun. Under date of June 13, 1839, Father Hilary Tucker writes to Bishop Rosati: "The Germans are also making preparations for commencing their church. Father Brickwedde went about collecting whatever he could for the building. It is said that almost all the brick necessary were donated by the owners of the brick yard. Father Tucker states that the cost of brick was three dollars per thousand delivered, or nine dollars in the wall. Other parishioners furnished all the stone for the foundations, others again offered to do the excavating gratis, others the hauling of the building material. Money was rather scarce at the time, but by the united efforts of these sturdy Germans the walls were raised up to the roof. During the winter the farmers cut the timbers and the shingles for the roof, whilst Father Brickwedde was on a collecting tour to the East and South, to raise the funds for completing the church. This trip was begun in November 1839, and carried him as far as New Orleans, where he was the guest of Bishop Anthony Blanc, at St. Mary's of the Assumption. Here he was from December 21, 1839 to January 5, 1840. Father Brickwedde must have had good success collecting; for the work on the church was resumed in early spring and completed during the summer of 1840. About the

same time Father Brickwedde bought additional ground near the church and erected his parish residence.

But we have run ahead of the year 1839; let us return to the Report.

There was no Catholic cemetery in Quincy in 1839, the public cemetery was on the site of the present courthouse where a few of the early Catholics found burial. Since 1839, the second public cemetery was opened on Broadway and Twenty-fourth Street. The first mention of a Catholic Cemetery in Quincy belonging to St. Boniface Church is found in the early part of 1841.

As to landed property, the mission of Quincy had none, except the lot donated by John Wood for Church purposes. But this lot was sold with the consent of the donor, when the new site was chosen. A fixed salary for the missionary was, of course, out of question. Father Brickwedde had some means of his own, and received occasional contributions from his parishioners, but no doubt, he often found himself reduced to real want. Yet he bore his lot patiently: in all his letters to the Bishop we found no word of complaint and no importunate begging. The people too, were poor in earthly goods, though rich in grace and hope. There were 241 souls, all Germans; The Irish and American Catholics falling to Father Tucker's charge soon after the date of the report. Father Brickwedde preached regularly in German, as he had not the facility of English speech. Father Brickwedde had a choir: every Sunday and Holy Day, there was High Mass at the church in the morning and Vespers in the afternoon. Catechetical instruction for the children was given regularly every Sunday afternoon.

Besides all these points of distinction Father Brickwedde enjoys the honor of being one of the pioneers of our present system of parochial schools in the Mississippi Valley. The parochial school is the bulwark of the Church in America. "No Church without a school," is our watchword today. But we know of no parochial school established by a secular priest in this our western country before 1839, save that humble plant of Father Brickwedde's in Quincy with its fourteen boys and ten girls. Convent schools and ladies' academies we had here and there in Kaskaskia, Florissant, Perryville, Fredericktown, St. Louis and in various places in Kentucky and the South, but the first parochial school established by a parish and for a parish, was that of Father Brickwedde conducted by the missionary himself in a small room in the first church building on Broadway and Eleventh Street in Quincy, Illinois. Father Brickwedde confined his priestly activities to Quincy and its immediate surroundings. His office of school-teacher almost required this restriction. Yet, once a year at Easter time, he visited the German settlement on Sugar Creek, in Lee County, Iowa, the present West Point. Fort Madison was on his way, and there is a

record of a baptism administered by him in that place. On one of these trips he writes, "The steamboat that took me there and back ran aground on the rapids in the Mississippi River, which detained me eight days." On account of this mishap Father Brickwedde was unable to attend the diocesan synod held in St. Louis, April 21, 1839. Bishop Rosati never came to Quincy. The first visit of a Catholic Bishop for the purpose of Confirmation was that of the newly consecrated Peter Richard Kenrick in 1842. Father Brickwedde's way of life was most simple and laborious. To teach his little band of pupils was his delight. The love of prayer sustained him in all trials. On sleepless nights he would rise and go to the altar in the adjoining room and pray for the poor souls, who, he was wont to say, had called for him.

In 1843, Quincy became a part of the newly erected diocese of Chicago, which included the entire state of Illinois, and thereby Father Brickwedde's connection with Bishop Rosati's diocese came to an end. On the 26th day of May 1847, Bishop Quarter of Chicago laid the cornerstone of the new church of St. Boniface which was not completed until Pentecost day 1848. The comparatively heavy debt of \$1,600.00 dollars resting on the congregation, induced Father Brickwedde to undertake another collecting excursion, this time to his old home in Northern Germany. It was a day of great rejoicing for all the good Quincy people when Archbishop Kenrick of St. Louis, came to consecrate the new church of St. Boniface the apostle of the Germans, October 22, 1848.

But unfortunately, this new church was to become the sad occasion of dissension between the pastor and a portion of his flock. Bishop Van De Velde of Chicago stood up for the good and generous priest, and when the rebellious element met even their own bishop with imprecations and threats of violence, the bishop ordered the church closed. Father Brickwedde departed from the scene of his long and faithful labors on March 16, 1849, and on the very next day the first cases of cholera in Quincy were reported. To the good people of Quincy this seemed a divine visitation for the scandal given, and they begged the bishop to send them a priest. Two Jesuit Fathers were placed in charge for the time being. But owing to the stubborn perversity of the ring-leaders of the movement against Father Brickwedde, the church was closed once more, until another, and now terrible invasion of the cholera softened the hearts of the most hardened. Father Kuenster restored peace to the storm-tossed congregation.<sup>5</sup> Father Brickwedde did not return to Quincy, but received the appointment to the mission in Libory Settlement or Mud Creek, where he built

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bruenner, Theodore, "*Katholische Kirchengeschichte Quincy's im Staate Illinois*," Quincy, 1887.

a new church of brick in 1849, and which he enlarged in 1862. In the course of time the untiring priest built a parish residence, a school and a house for the Sisters teaching his school. In 1857 he accompanied his Bishop, Damian Junker, on his visit to Rome. In November 1865, Father Brickwedde came to St. Louis on a visit, was taken ill on the return trip, at Belleville, where he died, November 21, 1865. The people of Libory carried home his remains in solemn procession and buried them in the church-yard near the sanctuary he had served so faithfully. Many hardships the good Father had undergone in his missionary life; many good and even heroic deeds he had done for God's honor and the welfare of the poor and sorrowing; many a disappointment and many a reproach and contradiction he had borne in patience, from those he had never harmed; therefore his name is still in benediction and his life, though closed, is still a power for good in the places once blessed by his presence; he was worthy to walk in the footprints of Father Marquette.

## THE VISITANDINES OF KASKASKIA

The great Ages of Faith knew none other but cloistered nuns: the disturbed condition of the Church following in the wake of the Reformation, seemed to call for religious communities of women that should undertake the active works of charity and consequently be free from enclosure. St. Francis de Sales, in founding the "Daughters of the Visitation of Saint Mary" at first intended that they should combine the labors of Mary and Martha, and should be free, after their year of novitiate, to engage in the duties of active life. In 1815, he abandoned this idea, and erected his congregation into a cloistered order. The Sisters of St. Joseph, about eighty years later, were to realize the plan reluctantly given up by the Bishop of Geneva. "Father John Paul Medaille, S.J." appropriating one of the dearest ideas of the holy Founder of the Visitation, and desiring to see formed a community of women, who should unite the life of Martha with that of Mary, the exterior works of charity with the repose of contemplation, submitted the plan to the Bishop of Le Puy, Henry de Maupas de Tour. A congregation of women with simple vows, devoted to teaching and the works of charity to the poor, the sick, and afflicted, was formed in 1696, in the city of Lyons. The first Sisters of St. Joseph were Frances Rambion, Jeanne Pellet, and Frances Allion.

Now, it is a noteworthy fact, that the Daughters of the Visitation and the Sisters of St. Joseph were the fourth and fifth religious institute of women introduced into the diocese of St. Louis by Bishop Rosati, the Visitandines in Kaskaskia, in 1833, the Sisters of St. Joseph in Cahokia and Carondelet, in 1836.

The early labors and vicissitudes of these two Sisterhoods so intimately related in their origin, shall form the theme of this and the following chapter.

"In 1833, on the 3rd, of May," writes the later chronicler of Kaskaskia, Father Benedict Roux in 1838,<sup>1</sup> "there arrived at this place a noble little colony, composed of nine nuns, having started from the Convent of the Visitation at Georgetown, D. C. on the 17th, of April of the same year. The superior quality of their talents, the refinement of their manners, the soundness of their religious principles, the amiability of their piety, the generosity of their sentiments,

---

<sup>1</sup> Kaskaskia, by Benedict Roux, in "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, pp. 203 and 204.

their consecration to God . . . all this assemblage of qualities strongly induced Kaskaskia to favor and support these heroines." As this is the first religious community of women established on the soil of Illinois, and as the history of these Visitandines is so intimately connected with the religious development of St. Louis it seems proper to dwell at greater length on the story of their early years.

Kaskaskia deserves to be called the cradle of Western civilization, yet at the time of the sisterhoods coming, the glory of Kaskaskia had departed. Politically, commercially and ecclesiastically it was but a shadow of its former self. War, earthquakes, and floods had done their worst in this once so flourishing region: yet there were remnants of its ancient greatness: the old French Catholic families, and a number of American converts. To an enthusiastic soul like Bishop Rosati the prospects of religion among such a people must have appeared very bright, indeed, if he could only succeed in establishing among them some religious institution that would attract and elevate the female portion of the population. In anticipation of such an establishment Father Matthew Condamine was appointed resident pastor of the ancient parish in October 1832. About the same time Bishop Rosati applied to Archbishop Eccleston of Baltimore for a colony of the Visitandines, and received a favorable answer to his request. The following are the names of the sisters of the foundation: Mother M. H. Agnes Brent, superior; Sr. M. Genevieve King, assistant and mistress of novices; Sr. M. Helen Flannigan, directress of the school; Sr. M. Isabella King, teacher, sacristan, robier, etc.; Sr. M. Josephine Barber, postulant; Sr. Catherine Rose Murray lay sister, cook, etc."

The sisters traveled under the protection of Mr. Richard Queen, a Catholic gentleman, and brother-in-law to Sister M. Genevieve.

Sr. M. Josephine, the postulant wrote a picturesque account of this journey,<sup>2</sup> which together with some letters of Archbishop Eccleston<sup>3</sup> form the sources of this interesting episode.

From Baltimore to Frederick the journey was made by train, the ascent of the Allegheny Mountains was accomplished in stage coaches, at Wheeling the traveling party took the steamboat and remained over Sunday in Louisville. The journey down the Ohio and up the Mississippi passed off without any noticeable incident. But for some unknown reason the Sisters were landed at St. Marys on the Missouri side. When on the next day they sent Mr. Queen across the river they found that no preparations had been made at Kaskaskia

---

2 "The First Convent in Illinois," *Reminiscences of Sr. Josephine Barber*, edited by Helen Troesch in "*Illinois Catholic Historical Review*," vol. I, pp. 352-371.

3 The letters of Archbishop Eccleston to Bishop Rosati are in the Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese and were published in the "*Illinois Catholic Historical Review*," vol. I, pp. 500-509.

for their reception. They were discouraged and wanted to return to the mother house: but the counsels of Mother Agnes and Sister Gonzaga prevailed: with bag and baggage they crossed the mighty river. At the landing, Father Condamine, the parish priest, awaited them, and placed them, for the time being, in the spacious house of William Morrison,<sup>4</sup> the entire second floor being appropriated to their use. On the following Saturday they held a reception for the elite of the town. On Sunday Father Condamine explained to the Congregation the purport of the Sisters' coming, and on Monday they began to prepare their own house. It was a store belonging to Colonel Pierre Menard<sup>5</sup> and lent to them free of rent—Counters and shelves were removed, and one room was arranged for a chapel with altar and tabernacle. Father Condamine here gave them Mass four times a week, on Sundays saying two masses, one for the Congregation and the other for the Sisters. "Donations of all kinds were pouring in from our friends—provisions, beds, blankets, culinary utensils, etc. They also gave us a chair apiece, which, until benches could be made, we carried up and down, from the choir to the refectory, and thence to the assembly room."

The Morrison and the Menard families were especially solicitous for the well-being of the sisters and generous in their support.

But the house proved too small for the purposes of the Community. The old Kaskaskia Hotel, now standing vacant and in a ruinous condition, being offered them rent-free was accepted and fitted up for Academy and dwelling. The former bar-room became the children's refectory and playroom. "The townsfolk, especially the Morrison and Menard families, were highly gratified at seeing us so comfortably located, and immediately placed their daughters at our school. Mr. Wm. Morrison had four daughters: Colonel Menard had an only daughter, and a number of grand-daughters and nieces whom we educated, and who, learning nearly all the extras, were very profitable. He likewise procured us patronage among his friends and agents in St. Louis and the country around; but for him and the Morrison families we could not have remained in Kaskaskia."<sup>6</sup>

"In the summer of 1835, Bishop Rosati being again in Kaskaskia, Mother Agnes spoke to him about selecting a spot for our future building, and he, accompanied by some others, went with her to see the lots proposed. The ground was fixed upon and purchased, Colonel

---

<sup>4</sup> William Morrison one of the most distinguished characters of early Illinois; his sister-in-law, Mrs. Robert Morrison, was a convert of remarkable intelligence and extensive information.

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Menard was a Canadian by birth. He held various offices of honor and trust, among them the Lieutenant Governorship of the state of Illinois.

<sup>6</sup> Troesch, op. cit., "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 362.

Menard advancing the money; but the greatest difficulty was in procuring workmen and materials, no such things being found in Kaskaskia. We wrote on to Baltimore to Mr. Wheeler, nephew of the late Father Wheeler, and son of the architect by whom the convent in Georgetown was built in 1831. He came out West and undertook our business. First of all in concert with Colonel Menard, he had a brick-yard started in Kaskaskia; but as there was no demand for the article (except for ourselves) in this town, where business was stagnant, a year-indeed, I think two years-elapsed ere a second kiln was ready for burning. Our house repeatedly came to a standstill, the workmen deserting, etc.; and when Mother Agnes resigned her charge in May 1836, very little more than the foundations were laid. Mr. Wheeler now proposed to begin a frame building, which should be contiguous to the one in brick already commenced; for, being a carpenter, it would be in his power to carry on the latter, as he himself would remain on the spot and assist in the work, which he promised to have finished before autumn.”<sup>7</sup>

It was at this juncture in July 1835, that Father Condamine was succeeded by Father Benedict Roux as pastor of Kaskaskia, and spiritual director of the Sisters. During his administration of the parish the old Church of the Immaculate Conception, once the pride of the Valley, was demolished to make room for a new structure of wood. On November 30th, 1838, Father Roux, having asked to be relieved of the Parish, but to keep the care of the Convent and Academy was succeeded by Father Timothy Conway. In 1839, Father John Mary Saint Cyr succeeded both Fathers as Pastor of the Parish and Spiritual Director of the Sisters.

The building of the Sisters House made but slow progress: and in consequence of this and other causes a certain amount of dissatisfaction had found a hold among some of the nuns. Devoted as they were to the contemplative life and interior mortification in the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, the Visitandines of Kaskaskia, were still susceptible of human feelings in as far as they keenly realized the hardness, and all but hopelessness of the struggle in which they were engaged. Archbishop Eccleston's letters reflect, as in the mirror of a great soul, this struggle between nature and grace, between high ideals and adverse circumstances, as manifested in the history of Kaskaskia Convent.

About three years after the foundation of Kaskaskia Convent and Archbishop Eccleston was made aware of the first rumblings of discontent. On May 27th, 1836, he wrote to Bishop Rosati:

“I deem it proper to inform you,” he wrote to Bishop Rosati, “that I received sometime ago letters from Sister Genevieve and Sister Ambrosia of the House of the Visitation at Kaskaskia expressing

---

<sup>7</sup> Troesch, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 363 and 364.

great discontent at their present situation and earnestly requesting my permission for them to return to the Mother-house at Georgetown. These poor sisters write under great excitement and without assigning the grounds of their disquietude, insist upon being recalled. This I have declined to do, and see nothing that indicates it to be the wish of Almighty God. They are obviously too much troubled and excited to view things in their proper light, besides, if these transfers and returns be once easily admitted, all the foundations, as well as the Mother-house, will be kept in a state of endless fluctuations and anxiety. Every discontent or trial permitted for the sanctification of the individual will be considered as sufficient to go from one house to another, to the great detriment of the good order of the respective communities. May I therefore, Right Rev. and Dear Sir, request you to use your paternal influence to pacify these two sisters and convince them that change of place is not accompanied by change of feeling and dispositions. I have written to them that I cannot consent to their return to Georgetown and have earnestly requested them to open themselves unreservedly to you and to seek for peace in blind obedience to their superiors.”<sup>8</sup>

During 1837, Sister Genevieve's name is no longer in the list of the Visitandines at Kaskaskia. She, more than any other member of the community seems to have been influenced by the discouraging account of Kaskaskia given to the Sisters by her brother-in-law, Richard Queen. Sister Ambrosia persevered until her death, which occurred October 2nd, 1837, shortly after the Community had taken possession of their new house. The new house (September 2nd, 1837) seems to have added to the sorrows of the Sisters, as three of their number died within its walls in quick succession: Harriet Pennington, Postulant, September 4th; Sister M. Ambrosia, choir nun, October 2nd; and Sister M. Gonzaga, choir nun, December 3rd.

By the end of 1837 only five of the original members of the foundation remained, but eight others had already taken their place, among them Sister M. Austin Barber, another daughter of the convert, Rev. Virgil Barber.

Bishop Rosati had been most persistent in his efforts to enlarge the community at Kaskaskia. His Vicar-General Father Philip Borgna came to Georgetown for the purpose, and succeeded better than the Archbishop had expected. “You could not, in the United States, have selected a more able and pertinacious suppliant. This gentleman has now the esteem and regard of all who have had the pleasure of making his acquaintance. Even the good nuns, whom he has plagued

---

<sup>8</sup> Eccleston to Rosati, May 27, 1836, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

out of their lives, find only one fault with him, his perseverance in suing for subjects for Kaskaskia."<sup>9</sup>

The Third Provincial Council of Baltimore assembled April 16, 1827. Bishop Rosati was, perhaps, the most distinguished member of the Council. No doubt the troubles and prospects of Kaskaskia were the subject of his conversations with the authorities at Baltimore and Georgetown. The affairs of the convent at Kaskaskia were improving but not as much as had been expected. There was the ever-increasing debt that frightened the sisters; and then the insufficient number of teachers for the Academy and the Orphan Home. In 1837 the Academy had fifty-seven young lady boarders and about twelve day scholars. The number of orphan children was eleven. Good work was being accomplished, but the means of the sisters were not in proportion to the demands made upon them. Bishop Rosati had financial troubles of his own, heavy debts and constant appeals for help from his priests and sisters. But the good Bishop never allowed himself to be disturbed by any spectres of debt. His trust in God and good people was unlimited. Consequently, he touched but lightly on the convent's financial embarrassment, which really was not so very serious, as long as Colonel Pierre Menard was among the living; but the suggestion that more sisters were needed to carry on the good work roused him to renewed efforts: Sister Austin in writing to the Motherhouse early in 1838, had given the most gloomy picture of their temporal concerns and embarrassments:

"Immense debts and no means or prospect of paying them! Everything depending on Colonel Menard; their property is at his mercy, and should he die without relieving them, which he has never promised to do, they would find themselves in difficulties inextricable, etc., etc."<sup>10</sup>

"Sister Helen is no less doleful on another subject," wrote the Archbishop, "She states that just before commencing her letter, they had held a council and consulted the Reverend Father Roux and had come to the conclusion that if the Convent of Georgetown could not send them some other sisters to assist in their Academy, they would be obliged to make over their little property to Colonel Menard and return to the house of their profession.

"I deem it the more urgent to put you in possession of these matters, as Sister M. Austin says expressly that you are not acquainted with the situation of their temporal affairs, and that they had always forbore communicating it to you for fear of giving you pain. I trust that these representations have taken a little of their coloring from the fears and imaginations of the good sisters. However, I feel that

---

<sup>9</sup> Eccleston to Rosati, in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>10</sup> Sister Austin to Motherhouse.

I have done but my duty in giving them to you such as they made them.'"<sup>11</sup>

Affairs looked gloomy, indeed, but Bishop Rosati never lost courage and confidence. Yet, postulants were few and the motherhouse, as another foundation had been recently undertaken, requiring eleven "of its hopeful, if not very efficient members," as Archbishop writes, adding by way of parenthesis:

"I am glad to find from your letter that you are better acquainted with the temporal necessities of the monastery at Kaskaskia than we had been led to suppose. Sister Mary Austin stated that you had not been put in possession of the real state of things, through the delicacy of the sisters, who rather preferred to suffer than to cause you uneasiness.'"<sup>12</sup>

At last in January 1839 Bishop Rosati's pious importunity is about to bear fruit:

The good sisters of the monastery having lately received a number of excellent postulants, have been devising some plan to comply with your earnest request that they should send assistance to Kaskaskias. They think that they can make up a little colony and have accordingly sent their names, with other particulars, to their sisters of Kaskaskia.

I need not add that I feel much pleased in encouraging them, from a desire to oblige you. But as I have had great difficulty about the foundation near Mobile and have been brought into unpleasant collision with Bishop Portier, in consequence of his having sent back to this house several sisters whom I had not recalled, and whom he could not, according to the rules of the Order, dismiss without the authorization of the Superior of the house of profession. I have advised the sisters to send out no subjects to any foundation without the express understanding with the Bishop, that they shall not be sent away except when recalled by the ecclesiastical superior of the house of profession. So far, my Right Reverend and Venerable Friend, as you are concerned, I should feel little hesitation in waiving the point. But as we both hold our lives by so precarious a tenure, I would thank you, in case you accept of the promised colony, to send me in writing your acquiescence in the rule above-mentioned by which no sister, originally sent from this house, can return to it without being recalled by its ecclesiastical superiors.'"<sup>13</sup>

The community having thus been augmented by the late arrivals from the Motherhouse, the burden became lighter to bear and the yoke sweeter; but seemingly not to all: One at least of the original members was still haunted with a desire to return to Georgetown. Archbishop

---

<sup>11</sup> Eccleston to Rosati, Purification, 1838.

<sup>12</sup> Eccleston to Rosati, February 8, 1838.

<sup>13</sup> Eccleston to Rosati, January 1839.

Eccleston answered: "As branches of the Visitation are multiplied, what will become of the spirit of discipline of the Motherhouse, if every sister who becomes discontented or troublesome can be returned on their hands? I must confess, that I would rather, for the good of religion, see the establishment obliterated from my diocese. May it not have happened, my venerated and my dear Friend, that some sisters of Kaskaskias, have exaggerated the evils of the monastery? No one has greater respect and esteem for good Sr. M. Austin than I have. But if your information comes from her, either directly or indirectly, I deem it proper to say that her too active zeal is liable to cast a very strong coloring over her predilections or aversions. And with all her truly valuable qualities, she has too much perspicuity in discovering, and too much freedom in dilating on the real or imaginary defects of her Mother Superior."<sup>14</sup>

This is the last letter of Archbishop Eccleston in regard to the Visitation Convent at Kaskaskia. Under Mother Seraphine Wickham, who became Superior in this year 1839, the Academy rose to a high degree of efficiency, a circumstance that seemed to promise fulfilment of Father Roux's prediction in 1838: that the "Convent and Academy of the Visitation, would by its celebrity, immortalize Kaskaskia."

But the great flood of 1844 tolled the death-knell of the Visitation Convent at Kaskaskia, which, however, was to rise again in a new place, under more favorable circumstances.

---

<sup>14</sup> Eccleston to Rosati, April 21, 1839.

## THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

In 1693 the Sisters of St. Joseph were spread throughout the "dioceses of Le Puy, Clermont, Grenoble, Embrun, Sisteron, Viviers, Ussé, Gap, Vienne and Lyons. In all of these places they were engaged in the instruction of young girls, the direction of orphanages and the care of the sick." But the fury of the Revolution swept them back to their homes in the world, and many of them to martyrdom. When the reign of terror had spent its force, the scattered members began to lift up their heads again, and in the summer of 1807, one of their number, the brave and patient Mother Saint John Fontbonne repaired to Lyons with several members of her former community of Monistrol. Father Claude Cholleton, Vicar-General of Lyons, re-established the Congregation of St. Joseph with Mother Fontbonne as Superior. The number of convents increased rapidly, the house at Lyons was designated as the Mother House, and Mother St. John became Superior General of the Congregation.

In 1834 Bishop Rosati, through Father Charles Cholleton received an offer from Mother Fontbonne to send a colony of Sisters of St. Joseph to his diocese. Father John Odin who visited Lyons in the same year, reminded her of this offer. Madame de la Roche-Jacqueline offered to defray the expense of establishing a community in the diocese of St. Louis. The Bishop was pleased to accept, requesting, however, that some sisters be sent who would undertake to instruct the deaf-mutes.

The call for volunteers for the American Mission brought splendid results.<sup>1</sup> Two sisters Celestine Pommerel and Julie Fournier, were accordingly sent to the Sisters of St. Charles at Saint-Etienne to learn the sign language: six others were to proceed at once to their destination: Sisters Febronie and Delphine Fontbonne, nieces of the Superior General, Sisters Marguerite-Felicite Boute, Febronie Chapellon, Saint Protais Deboille and Philomena Vilaine. The Archbishop of Lyons recommended the evangelical colony "to the Bishop of St. Louis, saying: 'They will be excellent catechists, good infirmarians for the sick, perfect sacristans, and zealous instructors; and their services cannot but promote powerfully the work of God in your diocese.'"<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Sister Mary Lucida Savage, Ph. D., is the authoress of a well authenticated and beautifully written volume of "The Congregation of Saint Joseph of Carondelet," B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1923.

<sup>2</sup> Gaston de Pins to Rosati, January 1, 1836, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

The little colony, accompanied by Father James Fontbonne, brother of Sisters Febronie and Delphine, set sail from Havre on the good ship *Heidelberg*, January 17th, 1836, landing in New Orleans March 5th, of the same year.

At the landing the sisters were received by the Pastor of the Cathedral, Father Moui, and brought to the Ursuline Convent. On the following day they were visited by Bishop Rosati, who had come to New Orleans for the consecration of Bishop Anthony Blanc. "I told them," writes Bishop Rosati, "about their future home in the town of Cahokia, in a home which Father Doutreluingne has prepared for the purpose not far from the parish church, and of another now ready in the town of Carondelet."<sup>3</sup> The Sisters started on their voyage to St. Louis on the 15th of March. They were accompanied by Bishop Rosati, Father Fontbonne and Father John Timon, then Visitor of the Congregation of the Mission. On March 25th, the travellers landed in St. Louis, where the Sisters were conducted to the Hospital of the Sisters of Charity.

The house in Carondelet which the Sisters of St. Joseph were to occupy was not ready for them. Two Sisters of Charity were living there with a small number of orphan boys. The completion of the new orphan asylum in St. Louis, however, would soon enable the Sisters of Charity to vacate the premises in Carondelet. Thus it happened that Cahokia, the ancient, became the first mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Father Doutreluingne had been pastor of the Parish of the Holy Family for over five years. The people were simple, pious Creoles, proud of their religious and social customs: they were not rich in earthly goods. Yet fairly prosperous. Their pastor had secured a building in the center of the town and fitted it up as a Convent and Academy. Bishop Rosati selected as teachers for the School, Mother Febronie Fontbonne, Sister Febronie Chapellon and Sister Saint Protais. The remaining three devoted themselves to the study of English in St. Louis, a neat cottage on the hospital grounds having been assigned for their temporary home.

The Sisters reception at Cahokia was a right hearty one. Bishop Rosati and Father Fontbonne accompanied the little colony. Father Doutreluingne at the head of the entire congregation of Cahokia welcomed them "as angels from heaven," and led them in procession to their new home, which they christened "St Joseph's Institute," but which the proud Cahokians dignified by the name of "The Abbey."

The school was opened with an enrollment of thirty day pupils and five boarders. The instructions were given in French. The school grew and prospered for eight years, but the almost regular overflows of the Mississippi, whilst rendering the already fruitful soil, still more fruitful, proved rather deleterious to the newcomers' health.

---

3 Rosati's Diary.

In May Father Matthew Condamine succeeded Father Doutreluingne as Pastor of Cahokia, and on August 8th, the young energetic priest fell victim to a malignant fever. Bishop Rosati held the funeral services. Father Condamine was laid to rest in the little cemetery beside the church at Cahokia.

Father John Francis Regis Loisel was appointed as his successor. Nothing daunted by these reverses the Sisters continued their work, and with the hearty cooperation of their Pastor, enlarged their school by the addition of a new room in 1837, and a pretty chapel adjoining the convent in 1838. The means for doing this came from the noble benefactress of the Sisters, Madam de la Roche-Jacquelin, who had sent three thousand francs for the Mission of Cahokia and Carondelet. A bell also came, sent by Mother St. John Fontbonne from Lyons. The chapel was blessed by Bishop Rosati, August 17th, 1838.<sup>4</sup>

"The Abbey" with its three buildings now became the spiritual center of the Congregation, until the great flood of 1844, spread ruin and disaster all through the Mississippi bottom and forced the Sisters to take refuge in their establishment in Carondelet, never to return to Cahokia.

Carondelet, the seat of the earliest Church in Missouri,<sup>5</sup> was destined to be the home of the Sisters of St. Joseph in America. The little straggling town of log cabins and stone houses, popularly styled Vide Poche, contained in 1834 a few hundred inhabitants, mostly Creoles, poor but honest and carefree, working their individual plot in the Common Field, that had come down to them from Spanish times. On a hill above the village stood the log Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, built in 1818, under the supervision of Father De Andreis of blessed memory, with the materials of the first Church of St. Louis. Near it was the presbytere, a log cabin of two rooms. The Cemetery lay around the church, and beyond it stood the log cabin, which the Sisters of Charity had erected in 1833 for their boys' orphanage. When the new orphan home in St. Louis was completed July 22nd, 1836, the Sisters of St. Joseph took possession of their destined home. Our Lady Poverty reigned supreme in this their humble abode. The style of the building was the usual one of two rooms with a wide passage-way between them. The attic was reached by way of a ladder, placed on the outside. Two sheds, one for school-purposes, and one for kitchen and dining-room completed the convent buildings. There was no furniture except one cot, one table and a few rickety chairs. Two ticks filled with straw, laid

---

<sup>4</sup> Sister Mary Lucida, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> The Mission and Village of St. Francis Xavier on the River des Peres founded by the Jesuits Marest and Pinet, was on the site of Carondelet.

on the floor, provided the Sisters with beds. No preparations had been made for the opening of the school, which was announced for September 19th.<sup>6</sup> The Sisters did not repine, but thought out an ingenious plan of obtaining the furniture for their class room. Twenty pupils arrived on the morning of the enrollment, and after some kindly conversations with the Sisters were told to return the next morning, each one with a stool, or a box, or a log of wood for a seat. Thus opened the School of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the town of Carondelet, Missouri. But the attraction of such noble lives soon told on the entire Community. Friends and supporters arose, and "Providence did not leave them without consolation. Occasional visits from Bishop Rosati and Father Fontbonne relieved their solitude.

Now and then an excursion was made across the river to the "Abbey" at Cahokia. In May 1837 came the glad tidings from Lyons, announcing the departure of the two Sisters, that had been intended for the American mission, but were detained to prepare them for the care of the deaf and dumb, Sister Celestine Pomerell and Sister St. John Fournier. They were to arrive by the end of May, but the summer months passed on without any further tidings of them, Bishop Rosati himself was growing anxious about the long delay, when on September 4th, the long-expected Sisters presented themselves at the episcopal Residence. But the Bishop was in doubt concerning their identity and requested them to converse in signs, which they did. But the best sign of their being the long-lost nuns, they presented the Bishop with three thousand francs, which the Countess de la Roche-Jaqueline had entrusted to them for the use of the Sisters. The weary travelers were kindly entertained at the Orphan Asylum, and on September 10th, proceeded to Carondelet. They had been detained at Brest, Havanna and New Orleans, which explained their belated arrival.<sup>7</sup> As Sister Mary Lucida tells us: "The log cabin convent was now crowded, but its doors were opened wide in October 1837 to admit another occupant. Anne Eliza Dillon, the first American subject of the Congregation, was the daughter of Patrick McAndrews Dillon, a wealthy Irish land-holder of St. Louis. She was born at St. Charles, Missouri in 1820. Her mother died when she was a child, and together with a younger sister, she was placed with the Ladies of the Sacred Heart at their Academy in St. Louis, where she received an excellent education and acquired great fluency in French. It was here at School in 1836 that she met Sisters Delphine and Felicite,

---

<sup>6</sup> Sister Mary Lucida, *op. cit.*, p. 45 s.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 47.

who during their first few months in America went every day to the Sacred Heart Convent for English lessons. The young girl was drawn irresistibly to the two Sisters. Like St. Francis of Assisi, she was attracted by poverty; and on finishing her education, she gave up everything that she possessed of this world's goods, and with the reluctant consent of her father, went to Carondelet and asked for the poor habit of a Sister of St. Joseph. This she received on January 3rd, 1838, with the name of Sister Francis Marie Joseph. On the same day, Sister Philomene Vilaine made her vows. Bishop Rosati, assisted by Father Saulnier and Father Pierre Chandy, of the Congregation of the Mission, officiated at the ceremony, which took place in the church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.<sup>8</sup>

"In the Spring of 1838 the Convent was enlarged by the addition of a second story, two small rooms at the west end, and broad porches on the river side."

A school for deaf-mutes was now started with four charity pupils. Bishop Rosati succeeded in obtaining an appropriation for this school from the Legislature, but the funds were to be used only in behalf of pupils that were residents of the state. This fund did not become available until the end of 1839.<sup>9</sup> Fortunately, the school-commissioner of Carondelet made an agreement with the Sisters which stipulated that a salary be paid to the Sisters by the Corporation of Carondelet, for teaching the female children of the town. The salary paid was \$375 annually. The boys were placed in care of Hamilton Michaud as "assistant Schoolmaster." This favorable turn in the affairs of the Sisters of St. Joseph was owing, in great part, to the mission given by Bishop Loras and Father Cretin during their enforced stay in and around St. Louis in the winter of 1838-1839.

All through these years Father Edmond Saulnier held the position of Pastor and Director of the Sisters: "A good but eccentric man," as the Sisters described him, he built the new stone-church in 1834, as the old log chapel was in danger of collapsing. On January 31st, 1837, Father John Fontbonne was appointed Spiritual Director of the Sisters of St. Joseph both in Carondelet and Cahokia. This led to certain misunderstandings between the Pastor and the Superior of the Sisters. Father

---

<sup>8</sup> Sister Mary Lucida, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> The amount of the appropriation was \$2,000 per annum. It was continued until 1851 when the State Asylum at Fulton was opened for the reception of pupils. But the Sisters of St. Joseph continued their excellent work for the deaf and dumb children of all nationalities at Carondelet, and since 1885 on Garrison Avenue, St. Louis.

Saulnier interfered with their interior affairs. They should take more interest in the parish, the services and the church-choir. This brought on strained relations between Mother Delphine and Father Saulnier. The voluble Gascon spirit received a reprimand from Bishop Rosati, that would, as he wrote, take a lifetime to forget.

But the strength of Mother Delphine was exhausted: In August 1839, she begged to be relieved of her office and sent to Cahokia as teacher. She was succeeded at Carondelet by Mother Celestine Pomrell. From her name, the Institution was at first called Madam Celestine's School, but received the official title of St. Joseph's Academy.

## THE KICKAPOO MISSION

It was in his first Annual Message to Congress, December 8th, 1829, that President Andrew Jackson inaugurated his new policy in regard to the Indian tribes east of the Missouri frontier: "Our conduct to these people is deeply interesting to our national character. Their present condition, contrasted with what they once were, makes a most powerful appeal to our sympathies. Our ancestors found them the uncontrolled possessors of these vast regions. By persuasion and force they have been made to retire from river to river and from mountain to mountain, until some of the tribes have been extinct, and others have left but remnants to preserve for a while their once terrible names. Surrounded by the whites with their arts of civilization, which by destroying the resources of the savage, doom him to weakness and decay, the fate of the Mohegan, the Narragansett, and the Delaware is fast overtaking the Choctaw, the Cherokee and the Creek. That this fate surely awaits them if they remain within the limits of the States does not admit of a doubt. Humanity and national honor demand that every effort should be made to avert so great a calamity.

"As a means of effecting this end I suggest for your consideration the propriety of setting apart an ample district West of the Mississippi and without the limits of any State or Territory now formed, to be guaranteed to the Indian Tribes as long as they shall occupy it, each tribe having a distinct control over the portion designated for its use. There they may be secured in the enjoyment of governments of their own choice, subject to no other control from the United States than such as may be necessary to preserve peace on the frontier and between the several tribes. There the benevolent may endeavor to teach them the arts of civilization, and by promoting union and harmony among them, to raise up an interesting commonwealth, destined to perpetuate the race and to attest the humanity and justice of this Government. The emigration should be voluntary, for it would be as cruel as unjust to compel the aborigines to abandon the graves of their fathers and seek a home in a distant land. But they should be distinctly informed that, if they remain within the limits of the States, they must be subject to their laws."<sup>1</sup>

In his Third Annual Message, December 6th, 1831, President Jackson reverts to the matter of the Indian migration to the Far West:

---

<sup>1</sup> "Messages and Papers of the Presidents," vol. II, pp. 456 and 457.



MAP OF THE MISSIONARY COUNTRY



"The internal peace and security of our confederated States is the next principal object of the General Government. Time and experience have proved that the abode of the native Indian within their limits is dangerous to their peace and injurious to himself. In accordance with my recommendation at a former session of Congress, an appropriation of half a million dollars was made to aid the voluntary removal of the various tribes beyond the limits of the States . . . It is confidently believed that perseverance for a few years in the present policy of the Government will extinguish the Indian title to all lands lying within the States composing our Federal Union and remove beyond their limits every Indian who is not willing to submit to their laws . . . . But the removal of the Indians beyond the limits and jurisdiction of the States does not place them beyond the reach of philanthropic aid and Christian instruction. On the contrary, those whom philanthropy or religion may induce to live among them in their new abode will be more free in the exercise of their benevolent functions than if they had remained within the limits of the States, embarrassed by their internal regulations. Now subject to no control but the superintending agency of the General Government, exercised with the sole view of preserving peace, they may proceed unmolested in the interesting experiment of gradually advancing a community of American Indians from barbarism to the habits and enjoyments of civilized life."<sup>2</sup>

According to this policy the various Indian tribes of the States were induced to leave the homes and graves of their fathers for their appointed reservations in what was called Indian Territory, which then embraced all the western territory of the United States beyond the Missouri and Arkansas frontier. About the time of which we are now writing the early thirties of the nineteenth century, we find these wards of the nation settled, tier above tier, along the Arkansas frontier, the Chickasaws, Choctaw and Cherokee along the upper reaches of the Arkansas River; then, along the Missouri frontier, the Osages, Shawnees, Delawares, with the indigenous but much reduced Kansas between them, all dwelling along the tributaries of the Kansas River; then the Kickapoos, Ottoes and Omahas, with the Prairie Potawatomi at Council Bluffs on the east border of the Missouri River. All the territory north of the Missouri line, was still a part of the Indian Territory.

As the government showed its willingness to help civilize these pitiful remnants of once mighty nations, the churches and charitable organizations of the country made application for assignments of the various tribes, among whom they might labor for their spiritual and temporal advancement. The Jesuit Fathers made no exception. In the summer of 1835, Father Van Quickenborne visited the various

---

2 "Messages and Papers of the Presidents," vol. II, p. 554.

Indian tribes along the western frontier of Missouri, among them the Kickapoos, settled a few miles above Fort Leavenworth.

There he met the so-called prophet of the nation, Kennekuk by name, and obtained his somewhat reluctant consent to have a "Blackrobe" established among his people. Applying to the head chief Father Van Quickenborne received better assurances of success: "I desire, as do also the principal men of my nation, to have a Blackrobe come and reside among us, with a view to instruct us."<sup>3</sup> Father De Theux, the Superior, decided to open a Jesuit residence among the Kickapoos.

In the autumn of the same year Father Van Quickenborne went to Washington to negotiate for government aid in behalf of his project. Writing from Georgetown to the Secretary of War, he broached his case, as follows:

"In answer to your favor of the 17th inst., I have the honor to state:—

1. That I am prepared to open a Mission with a school in the Indian country at the following places—1st. On the land of the Kickapoo in the vicinity of Cantonment Leavenworth.

2. I have three Missionaries, including a teacher, to commence the Mission and School immediately in the Kickapoo Nation. I am induced to commence with this tribe by the circumstance of it having expressed to me, through their principal men and chiefs, including even the prophet Kennekuk, a desire of having a Catholic establishment among them. The reason they alleged was, that they had for many years lived in the neighborhood of French settlements; that they had, in some degree, become acquainted with their religion, and that now they wished to be instructed in it. The prophet said that he had always hoped that a Black-gown, by which name he designates the Catholic priest, would be sent by the Great Spirit to help him in instructing his people and teaching them the truths he did not know.

Besides the three Missionaries mentioned above, the Catholic Missionary Society of Missouri, in whose name I act, has placed at my disposal for this year, commencing at this period, a sum of one thousand dollars. It is my intention to take into the school as many pupils as it will be in my power to collect and to add to the number of teachers, in proportion as the number of scholars will increase, as far as will be in my power; and I have the strongest assurance that aid will be given me by the same Society. For this establishment I should be grateful for every aid the Department can afford, either in the way of raising the necessary buildings or paying part of the salary of teachers or for the support of Missionaries."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. IX, pp. 99.

<sup>4</sup> Van Quickenborne to Secretary of War, September 17, 1835, Indian Office Records. The prophet was also called Keokuk.

Father Quickenborne's appeal was answered by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. "You ask an allowance from the appropriation for civilizing the Indians. The Secretary of War has directed that the sum of Five Hundred Dollars shall be paid to you or to an authorized agent of the Catholic Missionary Society of Missouri whenever information is received that a school has been established among the Indians. This information must be accompanied by certificate of the agent of the tribes, that a building has been erected suitable for the purpose, that a teacher is ready to enter upon his duties and that there is reason to believe that it will be well attended by Indian Children."<sup>5</sup>

"We are going to begin an Indian mission and school among the Kickapoo," the happy missionary wrote to Bishop Rosati, "Many of the Fathers here in Maryland manifest a lively desire to go and work among the Indians."<sup>6</sup>

The good Fathers of the Missouri Mission were still more delighted at the coming of Brothers Andrew Mazella and Edmund Barry who were destined to accompany Father Van Quickenborne to the Kickapoos. Father Garraghan in his article on the Kickapoo Mission gives a brief resume of their early history:

"The Indian tribe among whom the Missouri Jesuits were to make their first experiment in resident missionary activity were not unknown to their predecessors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Kickapoo (the name appears to be a corruption from a longer term signifying 'roamers') were of Algonquin stock, showing a close affinity in language, customs and ceremonial forms to the Sauk and Foxes. Their first known habitation was South Central Wisconsin, whence, they shifted their position to the Lower Wabash upon lands seized from the Illinois and Miami. As early as 1669, Father Allouez came in contact with them at the Green Bay Mission of St. Francis Xavier. Upon his fellow-laborer, Father Marquette, they made a distinctly unfavorable impression. Though professing loyalty to the French, in 1680 they killed the Recollet Friar, Gabriel de la Ribourde, a member of La Salle's party, on the banks of the Illinois. In 1728 the Jesuit missionary, Father Ignatius Guignas, falling into their hands was condemned to the stake, but his life was spared and, being adopted into their tribe, he brought them by his influence to make peace with the French.

"In the conspiracy of Pontiac the Kickapoo were allied with the Ottawa chief and took part in the general destruction of the Illinois tribes that followed upon his death. In the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 they fought on the side of the English. They suffered heavily in these conflicts, specially the second, and by a series of treaties,

---

<sup>5</sup> Herring to Van Quickenborne, September 22, 1835, Indian Office Records.

<sup>6</sup> Van Quickenborne to Rosati, September 22, 1835, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

beginning with that of Greenville, August 3rd, 1795, after Wayne's decisive victory, and ending with that of Edwardsville, July 3rd, 1819, ceded all their lands in Illinois and Indiana. The United States Government having agreed to pay them \$2000 a year for fifteen years, assigned them a large tract on the Osage River in Missouri. From there they moved west of the Missouri river to what is now Atchison County in northeastern Kansas in the immediate vicinity of Ft. Leavenworth. In 1822 only four hundred of the twenty-two hundred members of the tribe were living in Illinois. By the treaty of Castor Hill, October 24, 1832, provision was made for schools by an annual appropriation of five hundred dollars for ten years. This appropriation was applied to the Kickapoo school conducted since 1833 by the Rev. Mr. Berryman of the Methodist Episcopal Church."<sup>7</sup>

The prospects of success under these and other circumstances were not very bright: yet Father Van Quickenborne's courage and confidence never wavered. "Father Van Quickenborne," writes Father Verhaegen to the East, "left this place on the 25th ult. with Brothers Mazella, Barry and Miles. Father (Christian) Hoecken, who is still on the mission is to join him in a few weeks. Since his departure I have received no news from him. His health had much improved and he was full of courage. Everything appears favorable to his great and laborious undertaking. The Indian agent (Laurent Pinsoneau) is a French Creole and much attached to him. General Clark took him under his protection and Messrs. Chouteau & Co., will produce him all the advantages and comforts which the new situation will require."<sup>8</sup>

We have a long letter written by Father Van Quickenborne to Father McSherry soon after the opening of the Kickapoo Mission, from which a few interesting details will be of service here:

"We arrived here on the 1st inst., (June, 1836) precisely thirteen years after we arrived in Missouri the first time, when we came to commence the Indian Mission—better late than never. The steamer on board of which we came up, brought us to the very spot where we intended to build. We met with a very cordial reception from the principal chief and his warriors and from the prophet himself. There are two towns among the Kickapoos about 1½ or 2 miles apart, which are composed of the two bands into which the nation is divided. Pashishi, the chief, is quite proud of the circumstance of our coming at his particular invitation and, for this reason, wished me to build near his town; on the other hand the Prophet expressed a wish that we should do as much for his band as for the others. He said he had always told his people that a black-gown (priest) would come and help him,

<sup>7</sup> Garraghan, S. J., "The Kickapoo Mission," in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, pp. 30 and 31.

<sup>8</sup> Verhaegen to McSherry, June 2, 1836.

that he felt disposed to join us and to persuade his followers to do the same. By the agreement of the chief we intend to build between the two towns on a spot nearly equally distant from both . . . Father Hoecken and Brother Miles have been added to the number of those who started from St. Louis, Father Hoecken is getting sick. The others enjoy good health, except myself being as usual very weak. Our accommodations are rather better than I had anticipated. I do not know what we could have done here if we did not have the Brothers from Georgetown. I hope that your Reverence will receive an ample reward for your liberality towards us, and that the increase of the number of good subjects will allow your reverence to treat with Father General for sending us some more;—a teacher for the school-boys will be very necessary. Father Hoecken and myself hope to be able to learn the language. We are making now something like a dictionary. This will help those that will come afterwards. Since my arrival here I have seen the Potawatomi Chief Caldwell. He is a Catholic and wishes to have a Catholic establishment among his people. If we make this, as I have promised to the Department by order of our Superior, several Brothers more will be necessary. Father General has recommended the Indian Mission to Father Verhaegen in a particular manner.”<sup>9</sup>

A log-cabin was immediately fitted out as a chapel and on the next morning, Corpus Christi day, the Holy Sacrifice was offered up, in the presence of the wondering Kickapoo. All seemed to augur a blessed future. But dark clouds soon overshadowed the bright prospects. The Indian Agent, Major Cummins, took an unfriendly attitude towards the missionaries: Father Van Quickenborne lay sick and helpless for a month. Then rumors came that the Sioux were on the warpath, that they were close at hand, that they had routed the soldiers sent from Fort Leavenworth, that they had burnt the Sauk village and that they were moving fast on the Kickapoo villages and the Fort. It was but an idle rumor, subsiding as quickly as it had started.<sup>10</sup>

Father Garraghan gives a humorous description of the difficulties the little Jesuit Community encountered in making their retreat:

“The exercises were held in the only place available, Mr. Pinson-eau’s log-cabin, the door of which could not be closed, both on account of the sweltering heat and in deference to Indian etiquette. The Indians were now treated to a novel spectacle. They would enter the cabin, sit down opposite to one of the missionaries as he was engaged in prayer, with their gaze riveted upon him, and without so much as a syllable falling from their lips, and then, when the novelty of the sight had worn off, they would rise and leave. One day while the retreat was

<sup>9</sup> Van Quickenborne to McSherry, June 29, 1836, Baltimore Archives.

<sup>10</sup> “*Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*,” vol. X, p. 130.

in progress, a deputation from six tribes arrived in the Kickapoo village to negotiate a friendly alliance. The deputies were bent on seeing the black-robos' chapel and went there in a body, arriving during the time of meditation. They first stood at the door, eyeing curiously the furniture and praying figures within, but not venturing immediately to enter, for with all the members of the missionary party present, there was scant room for other occupants. In the end, however, one after another of the braves stepped over the threshold, offered his right hand to the Jesuits, beginning with the priests, and then withdrew, the whole ceremony taking place in the profoundest silence. During the eight days that the missionaries gave themselves up to prayer and recollection, no Indian ventured to interrupt or disturb them.<sup>11</sup>

Father Van Quickenborne's letter of October 10, 1836, to Father McSherry tells of the difficulty that arose with the Indian Agent, Major Cummins.

"Your Reverence will be somewhat astonished that we are as yet in the same log-cabin into which we went the first day of our arrival. Soon after I wrote to you last the Agent took into his head to advise or rather to order us to stop until he could get some further understanding. The letter I brought from the War Department requested Gen. Clark, and Gen. Clark requested the Agent to give me all necessary aid towards establishing a school among the Kickapoo. He could not understand the phrase. However, General Clark, to whom he had referred the case for decision, had decided that this phrase is imperative and has advised the Agent punctually to comply with the order given. Since that the Agent has changed and has written to me that any assistance he can afford will be cheerfully rendered. We have been thus stopped for about two months. I had to send off the workmen I had engaged and break the contracts, I had made, and pay all the expenses.

The Kaskaskias, Peorias, Weas, Piankeshaws, whom I visited two weeks ago, wish to have a resident priest. I have baptized about forty Indian children and as many more would wish to be baptized but being grown persons, they stand in need of instruction. Father Hoecken makes great progress in the Indian language; the Indians are astonished at it. He is able to converse with them almost on any subject. Upon the whole, the persecution we have suffered has been of service to us."<sup>12</sup>

At last after three months of uncalled for delay, Major Cummins saw his way "to certify that under the authority of a letter from the Officer of Indian Affairs of September 2, 1835, the Catholic Missionary Society of Missouri has erected on the Kickapoo lands a building for a

---

<sup>11</sup> "*Litterae Annuae*," quoted by Father Garraghan, l. c., p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Van Quickenborne to McSherry, October 10, 1836, Baltimore Archives.

school, has a teacher prepared to enter upon his duties and that there is a prospect of the school being well attended by Indian pupils.”<sup>13</sup>

But the promised sum of \$500 was not forthcoming until May 23rd of the following year. In the meantime the school-house and dwelling with chapel had been completed. The school-house was built of hewn logs, one story high, 16x15 feet in extent, with one window and one door and a cabin roof: the dwelling was a two story block-house 49x18 feet, and covered with shingles. Father Christian Hoecken was the first teacher of the school, with about twenty children in attendance. “The chapel was well attended on Sunday,” as Father Verhaegen writes to the Fathers of the Provincial Council of Baltimore in 1840, “some few are received into the Church, and many in fact baptized.”<sup>14</sup> Father Van Quickenborne in his letter of 1835 writes about a visit he paid to the Kaskaskia Indians, the remnant of the nation that had been converted to the Faith by Father Marquette, and led by Father Marest to the site of the City that was to immortalize their tribal name. Of this visit an elegant writer, probably Archbishop Kenrick wrote in the “*Catholic Cabinet*:”

“In 1835 the Rev. Father Van Quickenborne paid a missionary visit to the Miamis, on the north fork of the Osage River. They are the small remnants of four once powerful nations, the Kaskaskias, the Peorias, the Weas and the Piankeshaws. He was received by them with great joy; and many of them, having been baptized in their infancy by the priests who attended the old French village in Illinois, showed unfeigned readiness to enroll themselves anew under the standard of the Cross. They seemed to be indifferently pleased with the Methodist station, established among them, and willingly promised to return to the faith of their fathers, among whom the Jesuit missionaries had so successfully labored during the early part of the last century. An old woman, whose gray hair and bent-up form showed that she had belonged to by-gone times, crawled up to the missionary, grasped his hand with a strong expression of exultation and pronounced him to be a true black-gown, sent to instruct her hapless and neglected nation. She had lived at least a score of winters longer than any other of her tribe, but yet she distinctly remembered to have been prepared for her first communion by one of the Jesuits who attended the flourishing mission of Kaskaskia. His name she could not bring to mind, but described his dress and features in a manner to show what a deep impression this recollection of her early youth continued to make on her mind. She also gave a description of the old church of Kaskaskia; recited her prayers and sang a Canticle in the language of the tribe.

---

<sup>13</sup> Indian Office Records.

<sup>14</sup> Verhaegen to IV Council of Baltimore. Draft in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

She told the missionary that her constant prayer had been that her tribe, now exiled and almost extinct, might have the happiness to see a true blackgown among them. She congratulated those around her on the occasion and cried out like Simeon that her eyes had seen him now, and that she was ready to mix her bones with those of her fathers. Her death, which took place a few days after, was a great loss to the missionary. As she was the only person who knew the prayers in the Indian Language, and the only one who appeared to have kept herself untainted by the general depravity of those by whom she was surrounded."<sup>15</sup> The entire tribe of the Kaskaskias now numbered only sixty souls.

In June 1837, Father Verhaegen made an official visitation of the Kickapoo Mission, and gave a delightful account of his experiences to Father McSherry. He left St. Louis on the 14th of June and arrived at the village on the eve of the feast of St. Aloysius. His boat struck several snags and scraped a few sand-bars in the river, but without any damage. The good Father's enthusiasm over the beauty and fertility of Missouri now breaks forth in the following prose-poem:

"I did not know, my dear Father, that the state of Missouri possessed such a prodigious quantity of fertile soil. I regret that you were not with me; you would, I am sure, have been pleased with the truly enchanting picture which both sides of the river present to the travelers. Do not speak of the farms situated on the bluffs between St. Louis and St. Charles; good as they are, when compared with those of Maryland, on which you pointed out some prairie grass to me, as we rolled along on the cars, they sink into insignificance, when contrasted with the lands of our Upper Missouri. When I was in the East the beauties and improvements of which I do intensely admire, I anxiously looked for one respectable tree and one eminently fruitful spot, but in vain; in Missouri, I am now more convinced than ever, trees and spots of the kind are so numerous that, in order to avoid seeing them, one must fly to Maryland. What shall I say of the beauties of nature to the eye? I thought that the lofty rocks and sublime hills which the canal and railroad between Philadelphia and Pittsburg afforded to my sight could not be equalled by any prospect in the West; but even in these, Missouri is not surpassed by the East. I know your Reverence thinks I am enthusiastic in my account. I pardon the impression under which you labor, because to any one who has not seen Missouri, my description must appear incredible. *Veni et vide.*"<sup>16</sup>

Father Verhaegen then gives an intimate description of the landing which is about a mile and a quarter from the Mission house. "Father Van Quickenborne having been informed of my arrival by

<sup>15</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," vol. I, pp. 407 and 408.

<sup>16</sup> Verhaegen to McSherry, Baltimore Archives.

a courier, came to see me on board the boat, and I accompanied him to the Indian village on horseback. The site of the building is one of the most beautiful that could be selected. In the rear the land is well timbered. On the right the chief has his village, and the ground is cleared; on the left lives the Prophet with hills on which Ft. Leavenworth stands. Our missionaries have a field of about fifteen acres on which they raise all the produce which they want. They are about five miles from the Fort and have, of course, every necessary opportunity to procure at that post such provisions as their industry cannot yield. Many of the Indians among whom they live are well disposed toward the Catholic religion and several of them have expressed a desire of being instructed. However, most of them are still averse to a change of their superstitious practices and vicious manners. Of the 1000 souls that constitute both villages, hardly thirty regularly attend church on Sundays. Many come to see us on week days and, by the instruction which they receive during these visits, are insensibly to be prevailed upon to come to hear the word of God. Father Van Quickenborne has made but little progress in the Kickapoo language. He labors under many disadvantages and at his age he will never conquer them; but Father Hoecken speaks the Kickapoo admirably well. The savages call him the Kickapoo Father, a compliment which no Indian easily pays to a missionary—to be entitled to it he must speak his language well. When I was at the Kickapoo village, I assisted at one of Father Hoecken's instructions. The sound of his horn drew about forty to the chapel at 11 A.M.; but all did not enter it at the appointed time. They are a set of independent beings; they will have their own way in everything to show that they do not act from compulsion. There were in the chapel benches enough to accommodate a hundred persons; some few preferred them to the floor. They all kept silence well and behaved modestly. The Father in surplice knelt before the altar and intoned the *Kyrie Eleison* of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, the choir, consisting of Father Van Quickenborne, the three Brothers and two workmen, joined him, and the whole Litany was sung with a tone of variations too refined for my ear. Father Fenwick himself would have failed in an attempt to keep the time and hit the notes. Such performances suit the Indians; happily they love and admire a mixed and confused kind of music. The instruction lasted upwards of half an hour. I heard the words 'piano,' 'mane,' 'iniquo,'—I heard 'pas,' 'pasa,' 'pan,' and 'Oikia' and I was tempted to believe that the Kickapoo language was a mixture of Latin and Greek. Unfortunately, on inquiry, I discovered that the sounds expressed none of the ideas which they convey in other languages. In the course of a few days I will, Deo dante, write to my good Father Mulledy, and together with several interesting items relating to the customs, of the Indians whom I have visited, I will send him the *Our*

*Father* and the *Hail Mary* in their language. Father Hoecken has composed a grammar and is now preparing a dictionary which will be of great advantage to such as will henceforth join him in the glorious work which we have commenced. Much good can be done among the savages west of the state of Missouri. The Potawatomi are now on their way to the land which they have to inhabit. They are more than 5,000, in number; more than 400 already Catholics, and they (and especially their chief who is a Catholic also) are very anxious to have a Catholic missionary established among them. I must beg of your Reverence some assistance to comply with the request of those unhappy people."<sup>17</sup>

Yet beautiful as the country undoubtedly was, the spiritual condition of the mission was not very promising. The Prophet roused his followers to unfriendly demonstrations. Even the head-chief Pashishi assumed a hostile attitude. The Indians, like the children they really were in all things, save age and innocence, had grown weary of the mission house. Even the children showed no interest in religion and came to school only for the food, and the presents they hoped to receive there. Only a miracle could save the mission from further decay and death. What were the causes of this sad state of affairs? Why was Father Van Quickenborne's Indian mission not as successful as similar efforts in South and Central America and in California? One cause may be traced to the moral degradation of the Indian character itself that followed the cruel devastating wars of the preceding century. Then the passion of the Indian for strong drink which rendered him incapable of receiving the pure doctrines of the Catholic religion; and last, but not least, the open or secret opposition of the government officials and of the Protestant ministers established at the station. The lack of adequate means to carry on the mission work may also be put down as a contributing cause of failure.

"Had the Jesuit missionaries of the West been allowed to pursue their plans without let or hindrance; or, better still, had they received the undivided support of the government in the work of Christianization, these numerous and once powerful tribes would now form large and prosperous communities on our Western prairies. But Catholic efforts were not supported as they should have been, nay, were often antagonized by government under some specious plea or another. Our Catholic people, too, were not as earnest in this great work as might have been expected of them. Other interests seemed to be more urgent. Father Verhaegen in his appeal to the Council complains of this lack of means: "The prospect of these different missions with respect to the salvation of souls is such as to animate the missionary with the

---

<sup>17</sup> Verhaegen to McSherry, Baltimore Archives.

greatest courage in the midst of privation and labor. But we cannot conceal from the prelates of the Council, who have placed these missions under our care, that their successful continuance depends upon other encouragement or support than the sweat of the laborers. These missions have hitherto been kept up by remittances from Europe, namely, from the Association of France and from friends in Belgium and Holland, and also by a small annual allowance made by the government—; the last, however, is not extended to the establishment at Council Bluffs. These resources are precarious, it may indeed be said, that they nearly failed during the last year. It then becomes a most important question, what shall be done for the continuance of the Indian missions?"<sup>18</sup>

Father Van Quickenborne was recalled and sent to the Residence of St. Francis Assisi at Portage des Sioux as Superior, in place of Father Peter Verreydt who succeeded him in the Kickapoo Mission. Towards the end of 1837, rumors came that many perhaps all, of the Kickapoo tribe were preparing for another migration, to the Red River. In regard to this probable movement Father Verhaegen wrote to the Secretary of War: "Considering the manners and the inconstancy of the Indian tribes, I think that to effect any lasting good among them, it is necessary that those who labor among them, should conform as much as possible to their way of living and that expensive buildings should not be constructed on their lands before they are permanently settled on farms."<sup>19</sup>

Owing to the small number of children in the school in 1839, the Indian Office decided to discontinue the annual allowance of \$500. Father Verhaegen sent a strong protest to Senator Benton to be submitted to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The protest was seconded by Major Pilcher, the St. Louis Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and had the intended effect, but only for the period of one year: further allowances were to depend on the success of the school. Finally Father Verhaegen's strict honesty in making his report to the Indian Office, brought a discontinuance of the government allowance of the princely sum of \$500, which the very presence of the missionaries was worth to the government at least a hundred times over. When at last Chief Pashishi with twenty families who had been the Fathers mainstay in their troubles with the Prophet, withdrew to a place about twenty miles distant from the Missouri, all seemed to be over. Yet the Jesuit Missionaries resolved to stay even if all the nation were to move away. The Jesuit Residence, being in such close proximity to Fort Leavenworth, where a number of Catholic Irish and German soldiers were glad to have mass and the ministry

---

<sup>18</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>19</sup> Indian Office Records, MS.

of the sacraments, seemed the proper center for missionary efforts in the promising settlements of Jackson, Clay, Clinton and Platte Counties, in western Missouri. But the situation at the mission grew worse and worse, so that it was decided to suppress it. Father Eysvogels was directed to go to the Potawatomi on Sugar Creek.

Ultimate failure is the verdict the wisdom of the world would readily pronounce on Father Van Quickenborne's Indian Missionary efforts. But considered in the light of eternity, they bore manifold fruit of everlasting life in the vast number of Baptisms administered and souls of wayward sinners reconciled to God. Then there is the beautiful bright example of heroic courage, confidence and long-suffering patience manifested by the founder and his associates in the trying days of the seemingly hopeless contest with the powers of evil in high places and low.

It was as if the threatening failure of the Mission had at last broken his stout and loving heart, for a short while after his recall, he gently resigned his unconquerable spirit into the hands of His Creator and Sovereign Lord.

What we admire most in Father Felix Van Quickenborne is not his dauntless courage, nor his tireless energy, nor his wonderful resourcefulness in devising means to accomplish his projects, nor his quick and sure recognition of opportunities. All these were truly great and admirable elements of his character. But the trait that characterized him best, and formed the bond that united them all and directed them to one grand end, was his entire submission of will to the will of God. Father Felix Van Quickenborne, the Founder of the Missouri Province of the Society, will live on in history as one of our greatest men. He was the representative of the active life in religion, whilst Father De Andreis, of blessed memory, was the embodiment of the life of contemplation. Both have accomplished much for the Church, the one with his missionary labors, the other with his prayers and the fruit of his contemplations, but the greatest work of both is the beautiful, holy, Christ-like characters they formed under the influence of divine love and grace.

## THE POTAWATOMI MISSION OF COUNCIL BLUFFS

Before 1838 two great bands of the Potawatomi had been removed beyond the Mississippi and assigned new homes along the boundary of the State of Missouri, and here, as Father Verhaegen, S. J., the Provincial of the Jesuits, informs the Fathers of the Provincial Council assembled at Baltimore, May 3rd, 1840: "A second mission (after the Kickapoo station) was established in 1838 among the Potawatomi on the Missouri River, near Council Bluffs, about five hundred miles west of the Kickapoo station. Two Fathers and two lay brothers commenced this establishment on the 31st of May of the same year. On their arrival they received from the chief four log cabins for a school, dwelling and other purposes, and from the United States officer a block house (24 feet square), which serves as a chapel. One of the Fathers devotes four hours every day to the instruction of the children in the Christian doctrines; the other makes frequent excursions among the neighboring tribes, and according to his report, has baptized many children. Nearly two hundred adults have been admitted to the holy communion—the practice of bigamy has been in a great measure removed, etc. The accounts from this station are of the most cheering character and describe in glowing terms the happy disposition of thousands of these poor children of the forest, particularly of the women and children."<sup>1</sup>

The "Two Fathers" were the celebrated Peter De Smet and his companion, Felix Verreydt, one of the brothers was Andrew Mazella, the other George Miles. These "Prairie Potawatomi" were a mixture of various tribal remnants, the Potawatomi predominating and giving their name to the entire people. One of these leaders was the celebrated half-breed chief, Billy Caldwell, from Chicago, who had helped to found the first church in the city under Father Saint Cyr. The block house given to the missionaries by Colonel Kearney was originally built as a fort, but as the troops had departed, there was no need of a fort, and so it was converted into a church, the only church in Council Bluffs for a number of years. It was still in existence in 1855. The mission was placed under the protection of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph.

How did the happy result come about? As early as 1835 Father Van Quickenborne had busied himself in Washington to obtain an ap-

---

<sup>1</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

propriation for the proposed Indian school at Council Bluffs; but, as the Potawatomi were not expected to arrive on their reservation for at least two years, the request was not granted. After Van Quickenborne's death, Father Verhaegen, the Superior of the Missouri Mission, had renewed the application and fortified it with the following petition of the Potawatomi:

"To his Excellency, the Secretary of the War Department: The petition of the undersigned chief and warriors of the Potawatomi nation respectfully represent:

1. That in the course of a few months everything necessary for their permanent location in their new lands will be procured and that, agreeably to the benevolent intentions of the Government, they are disposed to better their situation by the introduction of the domestic arts and education among them.

2. That a school being necessary for the instruction of their children, they wish to see one established among them with the least possible delay.

3. That they desire this school to be conducted by missionaries sent to them by the Catholic Missionary Society of Missouri, because many of the nation have embraced the Catholic religion and will by this arrangement be enabled to enjoy the comforts of their religion.

4. That the common feeling of the nation is in favor of the Catholic clergy who, speaking the English and the French languages, can fully second the execution of the plan which the Government proposed to itself for the amelioration of their nation."

Signed in the presence of

B. D. Moon, Capt. 1st. D.

Wm. McPherson

B. Caldwell

B. R. Hunt, Agt.

Wa Bon Su

Pierish La Claire

(ten signatures)

Fountain Blue on the East Side of  
the Missouri, near Council Bluffs,  
13th September, 1837.<sup>2</sup>

As even this powerful appeal elicited no reply from Washington, Father Verhaegen had journeyed to the Capital and after a tedious delay obtained, not the desired government allowance for the proposed school, but the Commissioner's gracious permission "to establish a mission-post among the Potawatomi and to visit, either personally

---

<sup>2</sup> Files of Indian Bureau, Washington, D. C.

or through his subordinates, all the tribes settled within the limits of the Indian territory.”

Father Verhaegen was duly thankful for the favor, and at once started for home and, trusting in Providence for the necessary funds, organized the Potawatomi Mission with Fathers Verreydt and Peter De Smet in charge.

Brother Mazella was the third member of the Mission. General William Clarke, felt delighted at the fulfilment of his long-cherished desire that the Jesuits should undertake the Potawatomi Mission.

“Preparations to equip and send off the missionary party,” says Father Garraghan “were now made with suprising rapidity. Only eight days had elapsed since Father Verhaegen’s return from Washington, when he left St. Louis, May 23rd, 1838, on the steamer *Howard*, in company with Fathers De Smet, Helias, Eysvogels and Brother Claessens. Of the party Father De Smet was the only one bound for Council Bluffs. Father Helias was on his way to the vicinity of Jefferson City, there to inaugurate a period of missionary and parochial activity extending over thirty-five years. Father Eysvogels was to replace Father Verreydt at the Kickapoo village, while Brother Claessens was to replace Brother Mazella at the same post. The voyage up the Missouri was not without incident. On the fourth day the steamer’s engine broke down, with the result that the engineer had to leave his disabled craft and return to St. Louis to repair the broken fitting.”<sup>3</sup> After a second mishap to the rickety craft, Father Verhaegen got off the boat at Independence, while Father De Smet and his two companions were left on board to watch the baggage and continue their way by water as far as Fort Leavenworth. From Independence Father Verhaegen, having purchased a horse, made his way by land to Fort Leavenworth. He arrived there four days after leaving the steamer and almost at the same moment that the steamer herself put in at the Fort.<sup>4</sup> Leaving Father De Smet to superintend the landing of the party’s baggage, he proceeded with Father Eysvogels and Brother Claessens to the Kickapoo mission-house. Early the next morning he sent a horse to the Fort for Father De Smet, but the latter, in his eagerness to reach his brethren, had started off on his own account only to lose his way in the tangled woodland. It was Father De Smet’s introduction to the perils of the Indian country. Late in the afternoon he found himself to his great relief at the mission-house, only about five miles distant from the Fort. The account which he wrote to Father Verhaegen im-

---

<sup>3</sup> Verhaegen’s account abridged in “*Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*,” 1838.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, *ibidem*.

mediately on his arrival at Council Bluffs was the first in the long series of descriptive and narrative sketches of Indian mission-life that were to be read with eager interest by thousands on both sides of the Atlantic:

"We arrived among the Potawatomi on the afternoon of the 31st of May.

"Nearly 2,000 savages, in their finest rags and carefully painted in all sorts of patterns, were awaiting the boat at the landing. I had not seen so imposing a sight nor such fine-looking Indians in America: the Iowas, the Sauks and the Otoes are beggars compared to these. Father Verreydt and Brother Mazella went at once to the camp of the half-breed chief, Mr. Caldwell, four miles from the river. We were far from finding here the four or five hundred fervent Catholics we had been told of at the College of St. Louis.

"Of the 2,000 Potawatomi who were at the landing, not a single one seemed to have the slightest knowledge of our arrival among them, and they all showed themselves cold or at least indifferent towards us. Out of some thirty families of French half-breeds two only came to shake hands with us; only a few have been baptized. All are very ignorant concerning the truths of religion; they cannot even make the sign of the cross nor say a Pater or an Ave. This, as I suppose, is the cause of their great reserve toward us. They change their wives as often as the gentlemen of St. Louis change their coats.

"A fortnight after we arrived we discovered one single Catholic Indian; he came to see us and asked our blessing. We tried to get him to stay with us; he knew his prayers well and could serve us for a catechist.

"Mr. (Caldwell) though far advanced in years, seems to be a very worthy honest man; he is well disposed towards us and ready to assist us. The half-breeds generally seem affable and inclined to have their children instructed and we receive many tokens of affection from the Indians themselves; they come to see us every day. The chief has given us possession of three cabins and we have changed the fort which Col. Kearney has given us into a church."<sup>5</sup> The zealous Fathers were now ready and anxious to begin the work of converting their sadly neglected flock into tolerably good Christians. The obstacles to be overcome were the open and secret machinations of the medicine men, the prevalence of polygamy, and the deadly bane of drunkenness, which at times converted their towns into images of hell. The passion of the savages for strong drink is inconceivable.

---

<sup>5</sup> Chittenden and Richardson, "Father De Smet's Life and Travels," vol. I, p. 158.

"They give horses, blankets, all, in a word, to have a little of this brutalizing liquid. Their drunkenness only ceases when they have nothing more to drink. Some of our neophytes have not been able to resist this terrible torrent, and have allowed themselves to be drawn into it."<sup>6</sup> The annuities paid to the poor savages were the occasions of most detestable orgies.

"In all directions, men, women and children are seen tottering and falling; the war-whoop, the merry Indian's song cries, savage roarings, formed a chorus. Quarrel succeeded quarrel. Blows follow blows. The club, the tomahawk, spears, butcher knives, brandished together in the air."<sup>7</sup>

Here is a transcript from Father De Smet's Journal:

"June 3rd. A woman with child, mother of four young children, was murdered this morning near the issue-house. Her body presented the most horrible spectacle of savage cruelty; she was literally cut up.

June 4th. Burial of the unhappy woman. Among the provisions placed in her grave, were several bottles of whiskey. A good idea, if all had been buried with her.

June 6th. Rumor. Four Iowas, three Potawatomi, one Kickapoo are said to have been killed in drunken frolics.

"I know from good authority that upwards of eighty barrels of whiskey are on the line ready to be brought in at the payment.

No agent here seems to have the power to put the laws in execution."<sup>8</sup>

But the work of the Missionaries was bearing fruit all the while in spite of the rampant scandals. "Our congregation already amounts to about 300," wrote Father De Smet in July 1839. "At Easter we had fifty candidates for the first communion. I recommend, in a very special manner, these poor Indians, that they maintain their fervor."<sup>9</sup>

August 20, 1838, Father De Smet communicated to his Superior in St. Louis, Father Verhaegen, further particulars on the progress of the Mission:

"I think I told you, the first time I wrote you, that I had already baptized twenty-two persons. Today the number of those upon whom I have had the consolation of conferring holy baptism amounts to seventy-six, among whom I reckon thirty-four adults of ages from twelve to sixty years. I am sure your Reverence would be touched to see with what fervor these good Indians assist at the holy sacrifice and with what docility they listen to our instructions. For my part, I assure

---

<sup>6</sup> Chittenden and Richardson, vol. I, p. 184.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, vol. I, p. 171.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, vol. I, p. 172.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, vol. I, p. 184.

you that I see the work of God in it and that I feel penetrated with gratitude toward those who by their prayers cease not to obtain for us from Heaven these unexpected successes. One of our first conquests for Jesus Christ was the spouse of the head chief of the Potawatomi nation. She enjoys the greatest consideration among the Indians, and I venture to hope, that her example will have a great influence upon the rest of her compatriots. Since I could not at the beginning express myself with sufficient facility, I was obliged for several weeks to make use of an interpreter. As soon as I found her well enough instructed and disposed I admitted her to the sacrament of regeneration, which she received with all signs of the liveliest faith and the most ardent piety. Eight other persons, who had imitated her example, shared her happiness.'<sup>10</sup>

"My companion, Reverend Father Verreydt, lately visited a village belonging to the mission, where they promised to let him baptize all the little children.

"The feast we have just been celebrating in honor of the assumption of the glorious Queen of Heaven will never be forgotten in this mission; it was celebrated in a poor wooden church, but I can assure you that no place in the world ever offered a more consoling spectacle nor one more agreeable to the Almighty and His most holy Mother.

"In the afternoon of that day I baptized eleven adults and a little Indian girl who was sick. Three of these adults had already reached their fiftieth year; five were twenty and three about fifteen years old. All exhibited during the ceremony a great deal of piety and fervor. Afterward we sang together several canticles to praise and bless the Lord's mercies. At the close of the ceremony, four couples received the nuptial benediction according to the Catholic rite. All who were present were so touched with what they had seen and heard that, yielding to the grace of the Holy Spirit, they demanded urgently to be instructed.'<sup>11</sup> But as usual in the work of reform, the children were the means to open the pathway to the hearts of the parents, and the groundwork to success.

Schools for the Potawatomi children were maintained by the missionaries, but without government subsidy. "We have opened a school," Father De Smet informed Father Roothaan, the Jesuit General, (in Rome) a few weeks after the arrival, "but for the lack of larger quarters we are only able to receive some thirty children. Twice a day we give an instruction to those whom we are preparing for baptism."<sup>12</sup> The Annual Letters for 1839 give a rather glowing account of

---

<sup>10</sup> Chittenden and Richardson, vol. I, p. 168.

<sup>11</sup> Idem, Ibidem.

<sup>12</sup> Idem, ibidem, p. 16.

the results obtained in the school: "The boys, as everybody acknowledges, are changed into entirely new beings. People marvel to see so many boys studying from morning to night, singing hymns composed by the missionaries, reciting the rosary, and assisting at religious instructions twice a day. So tenacious is the memory of the boys that they can remember prayers heard only twice. A choir made up of forty of their number sang hymns in English, French, Latin and Potawatomi. No other school except the Catholic one was kept on the reserve."<sup>13</sup>

Sub-agent Cooper's report dated in the fall of 1840 has the following: "Schools there are none here under the authority of the government. There are two Roman Catholic priests residing within my agency, of good moral character, who set a good example to the Indians and half-breeds. They have a chapel, and school and teacher, and have several young Indians in the school, who are coming on pretty well."<sup>14</sup>

Of course, a Catholic could not expect much more from a government official in the way of recognition of educational and charitable work done for the nation's wards without any assistance from the nation's treasury. Mere toleration and a supercilious nod of approval was thought amply sufficient. Indeed the Jesuit Fathers did not need the world's approbation: yet it would have been a gracious act, and gracefully received.

Father De Smet's graphic account of the sinking of a Missouri river steamer within sight of Council Bluffs, must find a place here, as it shows the loving and loveable nature of the man:

"First, I will narrate to you the great loss that we experienced towards the end of April. Our Superior sent us from St. Louis, goods to the amount of \$500, in ornaments for the church, a tabernacle, a bell, and provisions and clothes for a year. I had been for a long time without shoes, and from Easter we were destitute of supplies. All the Potawatomi nation were suffering from scarcity, having only acorns and a few wild roots for their whole stock of food. At last, about the 20th of April, they announced to us that the much-desired boat was approaching. Already we saw it from the highest of our hills. I procured without delay, two carts to go for the baggage. I reached there in time to witness a very sad sight. The vessel had struck on a sawyer, was pierced, and rapidly sinking in the waves. The confusion that reigned in the boat was great, but happily no lives were lost. The total damage was valued at \$40,000. All the provisions forwarded by Government to the savages were on board of her. Of our effects four articles were saved; a plough, a saw, a pair of boots and some wine. Providence

---

<sup>13</sup> Annual Letters for 1839.

<sup>14</sup> Senate Document 26th Congress, 2nd Session, vol. I, p. 397.

was still favorable to us. With the help of the plough, we were enabled to plant a large field of corn; it was the season for furrowing. We are using the saw to build a better house and enlarge our church, already too small. With my boots I can walk in the woods and prairies without fear of being bitten by the serpents which throng there. And the wine permits us to offer to God every day the holy sacrifice of the Mass, a privilege that had been denied us during a long time. We therefore, returned with courage and resignation to the acorns and roots until the 30th of May. That day another boat arrived. By the same steamer, I received news from you, as well as a letter from my family and from the good Carmelite superior."<sup>15</sup>

From the baptismal and marriage registers of St. Joseph's Mission Father Garraghan was able to gather data concerning the ministry of the Fathers during the three years that the Mission was maintained. The baptisms during this period numbered 308. The first recorded is that of Cather Bourbonne, a Potawatomi, on June 9th, 1838. She is the first person whose baptism at Council Bluffs is attested by documentary evidence. All baptismal entries up to February 8th, 1840, are in Father De Smet's handwriting. Caldwell, the principal business chief of the nation, was god-father to John Naakeze, baptized December 29th, 1838, at the age of approximately 102. The last baptism in the mission register is in Father Eysvogels' hand and bears date July 17, 1841. The first entries in the marriage register are dated August 15, 1838. On that day Father De Smet, joined in Christian wedlock Pierre Chevalier and Kwi-wa-te-no-lue, and Louis Wilmot (Ouilmette) and Maria Wa-wiet-wo-kue. As may be readily surmised, these are the earliest certified marriages in the annals of Council Bluffs. The marriage ceremonies performed by Father De Smet at the Mission numbered 20 in all, the last being dated January 5th, 1840. After a stay of several months at the Novitiate whither he had returned from his Indians, broken down in health, Father Christian Hoecken, was attached to St. Joseph's Mission in the summer of 1840. Four marriages are credited to him in the marriage register of the Mission, the earliest dated August 6, 1840, and the last January 28, 1841.<sup>16</sup>

At the close of his article on the "Potawatomi Mission of Council Bluffs" Father Garraghan gives a concise and lucid account of the last days of the Mission:

"On April 29th, Father De Smet took passage on the *St. Peter's*, a steamboat of the American Fur Company, then making its annual trip

<sup>15</sup> Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, vol. I, p. 184.

<sup>16</sup> Garraghan, "The Potawatomi Mission of Council Bluffs," "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, pp. 171 and 172.

to the Yellowstone to carry supplies to the Indians and bring down their furs in return. He had planned to visit the Yankton Sioux in their village, some 360 miles above Council Bluffs, in order to do a little missionary work among the tribe and attempt to establish relations of amity and peace between the latter and the Potawatomi, who ever since their arrival at Council Bluffs, had lived in mortal dread of their bellicose neighbors to the North.

“Having in the course of the voyage instructed and baptized on board the steamer a woman and her three children and heard the confessions of a number of voyagers bound for the Rocky Mountains, Father De Smet arrived May 11 at the Yankton village. Here he met the Yankton chiefs and warriors in council and was hospitably entertained by them at a feast, at which he took occasion to discuss with them the principal object of his visit, the establishment of a durable peace between them and his spiritual children, the Potawatomi.

“His efforts met with success. He persuaded the Sioux to make presents to the children of the Potawatomi warriors they had killed and to agree to visit the Potawatomi and smoke with them the calumet of peace. In the evening of the same day on which the council was held he explained the Apostle’s Creed to the Indians and baptized a great number of their children. His mission thus accomplished, he seized the first opportunity of returning to Council Bluffs, making the downstream voyage in the only craft he found available, a dugout, or hollowed-out log, ten feet long by one and half wide. Guided by two skillful pilots, and traveling from four o’clock in the morning to sunset, the frail bark covered the 360 miles to Council Bluffs in three days.

“In the summer of 1839 there arrived at Council Bluffs two young Flathead braves, who were making the long journey from their homeland west of the Rocky Mountains to St. Louis for the purpose of securing Catholic missionaries for their tribe. The zeal of Father De Smet was at once aroused and, disappointed as he was over conditions in the Potawatomi reserve and the prospects of future missionary labor in that quarter, he eagerly offered himself to answer the signal of spiritual distress that came at this opportune moment from the remote Northwest. Father Verhaegen, the Jesuit Vice-Provincial in St. Louis, having determined to ascertain first what the prospects held out by the new missionary field thus opened up to his Order, dismissed the Flathead delegates with a promise that a missionary would be dispatched to their tribe on a prospecting trip early in the coming spring. Father De Smet was commissioned to undertake this trip, arriving in St. Louis from Council Bluffs the last day of February 1840. His status as resident missionary at Council Bluffs thus came to an end and he entered upon that period of intensive missionary effort on behalf of the Oregon

Indians with which his career is most closely identified. Father De Smet left Westport at the mouth of the Kansas for the Rocky Mountains in April 1840, discharged satisfactorily the purpose of his visit to the Flatheads, whom he found eagerly awaiting the advent of Catholic missionaries, and returned home by the Missouri River, making a stop in November at Council Bluffs where he found that, during his absence, conditions had taken on a more discouraging aspect than ever.<sup>17</sup>

"The very night of our arrival among our Fathers at Council Bluffs, the river closed. It would be in vain for me to attempt to tell what I felt at finding myself once more amidst our brothers, after having travelled 2,000 Flemish leagues, in the midst of the greatest dangers and across the territories of the most barbarous nations. I had, however, the grief of observing the ravages which unprincipled men, liquor-sellers, had caused in this budding mission. Drunkenness, with the invasion of the Sioux on the other hand, had finally dispersed my poor savages. While awaiting a more favorable turn of events, the good Fathers Verreydt and (Christian) Hoecken busy themselves with the cares of their holy ministry among some fifty families that have had the courage to resist these two enemies. I discharged my commission to them from the Sioux, and I venture to hope that in the future there will be quiet in that quarter."<sup>18</sup>

In the Summer of 1841 the situation of Council Bluffs from the view-point of missionary endeavor continued to be distinctly discouraging. Writing in July to Father Van Assche at Florissant, Father Verreydt dwells on the conditions which were to result in a few weeks in the definite abandonment of the mission.

"Our people here like us very much; but they do not want to listen to our good counsel. Getting drunk is the only fault they have; otherwise, we would live here in a Paradise. But now, in the condition they are, it is indeed very disagreeable to live among them. As you are at home in the charming-business, could your Reverence not give me a means to make fellows here sober men and sober women; for women, as well as men, get tipsy whenever they have a chance. Oh, my friend, it looks very bad to see these poor creatures often like hogs wallowing in the mud. I think you have done very well not to have come out to these frontier places, where almost everybody is trying to delude and impose upon these poor creatures. Liquor is brought in here in whole cargoes, which reduces our Indians to extreme poverty, which is, as you know, the mother of all vice. Such is our position

---

<sup>17</sup> Garraghan, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

<sup>18</sup> Chittenden and Richardson, *De Smet*, vol. I, p. 358.

here. You may, of course, pray hard for us all. We cannot help it; patience will not cure the evil, I fear.''<sup>19</sup>

The United Nation or the Prairie Potawatomi, had thus signally disappointed the hopes once entertained of their advancement in the ways of upright and Christian living. On the other hand, their kinsmen of Sugar Creek, the Potawatomi of Indiana or the Forest Potawatomi of whom we shall give an account in our next chapter, were steadily advancing to the condition of an orderly and edifying Christian community.

The conclusion was accordingly reached to abandon Council Bluffs as a center of resident missionary endeavor and transfer the Fathers stationed there to Sugar Creek. In pursuance of instructions received from St. Louis, Father Verreydt and Christian Hoecken, together with Brothers Mazzella and Miles bade farewell to Council Bluffs in August 1841 and journeyed to Sugar Creek, which they reached on the 29th of that month. Thenceforth the Iowa Potawatomi were without spiritual aid except for an occasional visit of Father Christian Hoecken from Sugar Creek. In April 1842, the latter administered four baptisms at Council Bluffs. In November 1844, he administered twenty more at the same post, all to Indians or half-breeds. In May, 1846, he was again with the United Nation, baptizing on this occasion thirty-eight infants and a dying squaw. This was apparently the last visit of a Catholic priest to Council Bluffs before the closing of the Potawatomi reserve. Two years later the Indians were removed to their new lands on the Kansas River assigned them under the treaty of 1846, where they were united with the Sugar Creek division of the tribe and came again under the spiritual care of Jesuit missionaries.

---

<sup>19</sup> Verreydt to Van Assche, July 2, 1841, Archives St. Louis Archdiocese.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF THE OREGON MISSIONS

Towards the close of the year 1831, a delegation of four Indians from beyond the Rocky Mountains reached the city of St. Louis. Their language was different from all the Indian dialects with which the inhabitants had some acquaintance. Yet, as these visitors gradually made themselves understood, it was learnt that they had come to obtain religious teachers for their people, the Flat-Head and Nez Percé tribes near the Pacific Ocean. They visited the Catholic Cathedral and attended divine service with all possible reverence. Owing to the change of climate and the unwonted life in a city, these children of the wilderness grew ill; two of them were baptized on their death bed by Fathers Roux and Saulnier of the Cathedral, and, were buried with all the rites of the Church. The other two started in the Spring of 1832, on their return voyage, but only one reached his home, as the other died on the way. These are the simple facts of the occurrences, similar in many ways to numerous other delegations sent to St. Louis by the Indian tribes round about for the purpose of obtaining a Black-Robe as their guide and teacher. Yet this visit is specially remarkable in our early annals, not only on account of the vast distance these seekers after God had traveled, but even more so on account of the great and lasting results it eventually matured in the Catholic missions of Oregon. There is another point of interest connected with this embassy, namely the legendary embellishment it has found up to the present day, in the Protestant missionary story of the saving of Oregon for the Union, or as it is called by later historical writers, "the Marcus Whitman legend."<sup>1</sup>

The legendary story takes account of the facts as we have related them with one exception. Not for Black-Robes, Catholic missionaries, did the Flat-Head and Nez Percé come from the far-away Pacific slope, but for the Book, the Book of Heaven, the Bible. And if they asked Governor Clark for a missionary, it was not a Catholic priest they desired but a Protestant preacher. After two had died, and been buried in the Cathedral Cemetery, the two remaining delegates were entertained at a banquet by General Clark; at which, the Old Chief, a Nez Percé, is introduced as delivering the following lament. "I came to You, the Great Father of the White Men, with but one eye partly opened. I am to return to my people beyond the mountains of snow at the setting sun, with both eyes in darkness, and both arms

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviated from my Account of the Flathead and Nez Percé Delegation to St. Louis, 1831-1839, "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. II, pp. 183 ss.

broken. I came for teachers and am going back without them. I came to You for the Book of God. You have not led me to it. You have taken me to Your big house, where multitudes of Your children assemble, and where Your young women dance as we do not allow our women to dance, and You have taken me to many other big houses where the people bow down to each other and light torches to worship pictures. The Book of God was not there. And I am to return to my people to die in darkness."<sup>2</sup>

This parting speech of the Nez Percé chief, was first published by the Rev. H. H. Spalding in the *Walla-Walla Statesman*, February 16th, 1866, about thirty-four years after the supposed event. In 1833, we find the Lament beautifully amplified and Indianized in the Rev. William Borrow's "Oregon": "I came to You over the trail of many moons from the setting sun." . . . and so on in the vein of Brand and Logan "My people sent me to get the white man's Book from Heaven." "You took me where they worship the Great Spirit with candles, and the Book was not there . . . You made my feet heavy with burdens of gifts, and my moccasins will grow old in carrying them, but the Book is not among them."

In William Mowry's book (*Marcus Whitman and the Early Days of Oregon*, 1901), the romantic address is printed in full as an authentic fact of history, thus leading Edwin Eells to make the dramatic statement: "These were the words that saved Old Oregon and the Pacific Northwest to the government of the United States."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Johnson, C. T., "The Evolution of a Lament," in "Washington Historical Quarterly," vol. II, No. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Johnson, op. cit. The historian is often called upon to cut down the tangled undergrowth of legendary stories and time-honored propaganda in order to make room for the field or garden of true history. F. H. Hodder, of the University of Kansas, does this in a very able article in "The Mississippi Valley Historical Review," for March 1922, under the title "Propaganda as a Source of American History." We too subscribe the few words with which Mr. Hodder cuts down the luxuriant tale, "How Whitman saved Oregon for the Union."—"I can barely allude to the most extraordinary achievement of propaganda in our history and that is the general acceptance of the claim that Marcus Whitman saved Oregon—a claim which Professor Edward G. Bourne and Mr. William I. Marshall disproved twenty years ago, but which is nevertheless still rampant in certain sections of the country. In its extreme form the story claimed that Whitman reached Washington just in time to prevent Webster from trading Oregon to Ashburton for a "codfishery," in spite of the fact that Whitman did not visit Washington until a year after the Ashburton Treaty was concluded. It is popularly believed, as a result of the campaign slogan "fifty-four forty," that all of Oregon was in dispute between Great Britain and the United States. Seven times the United States had offered to settle the Oregon boundary upon the line of the forty-ninth parallel and as often Great Britain had stood for the line of the Columbia River. We could not therefore reasonably claim anything north of the forty-ninth parallel and Great Britain could not claim anything south of the Columbia. The only part of Oregon really in dispute was, therefore, between the Columbia and the forty-ninth parallel, and that part of Oregon Whitman never reached."

I have dwelt at greater length on the so-called Indian Lament because it has been used by Protestant writers to clinch the argument in favor of the view that the purpose of the Flat-Head and Nez Percé delegation to St. Louis was to obtain teachers of the Protestant brand of Christianity, together with their book, the Bible, and not what Bishop Rosati offered them, Catholic missionaries, and the Holy Mass.

Now what are the real facts of the case? Or what are the historical grounds for the Catholic version of this interesting episode in our missionary annals? Joseph Rosati, Bishop of St. Louis, was a most exact and painstaking recorder of contemporary events. In his Letter Book for 1831, he notes under date of December 31, that he had sent a letter to Mgr. Pelagaud, of Lyon, with information in regard to two savages, Tetes Plattes,<sup>4</sup> baptized and subsequently buried in St. Louis.

This letter was published in the Annals of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith. Under date of December 31, 1831, Bishop Rosati wrote as follows:

"Some three months ago four Indians, who live across the Rocky Mountains near the Columbia River (Clark's Fork of the Columbia) arrived at St. Louis. After visiting General Clark, who, in his celebrated travels has visited their nation and has been well treated by them, they came to see our church and appeared to be exceedingly well pleased with it. Unfortunately, there was not one who understood their language. Sometime afterwards two of them fell dangerously ill. I was then absent from St. Louis.

"Two of our priests visited them and the poor Indians seemed to be delighted with the visit. They made signs of the cross and other signs which appeared to have some relation to baptism. The Sacrament was administered to them; they gave expressions of satisfaction. A little cross was presented to them. They took it with eagerness, kissed it repeatedly and it could be taken from them only after death. It was truly distressing that they could not be spoken to. Their remains were carried to the church, and their funeral was conducted with all the Catholic ceremonies. The other two attended and acted very becomingly. We have since learned from a Canadian, who has crossed the country which they inhabit, that they belong to the nation of Flat-Heads, who as also another called Black Feet, had received some notions of the Catholic religion from two Indians who had been to Canada, and who had related what they had seen, giving a striking description of the beautiful ceremonies of the Catholic worship and telling them that it was also the religion of the whites. They have retained what they could of it, and they have learned to make the Sign of the Cross and pray. These nations have not yet been corrupted

---

<sup>4</sup> Flat-head Indians.

by intercourse with others. Their manners and customs are simple and they are very numerous. Mr. Condamine (Rev. Matthew Condamine was one of Bishop Rosati's clergy attached to the Cathedral) has offered himself to go to them next spring with another. In the meantime we shall obtain some further information of what we have been told and of the means of travel."<sup>5</sup>

The Book of Sepultures 1781-1832, of the St. Louis Cathedral, contains the entries of Baptisms and Burials of the two members of the delegation, the one signed by Benedict Roux, the other by Edmond Saulnier.

General Clark, in company with Meriwether Lewis, was among the first white men that came to the country about the Columbia River, September 1805. At the time of which we are writing, 1831-1832, he was Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the West. He was a man of untarnished honor, and highly respected by all. His interest in the Indians was generous and unselfish. Our Flat-Head and Nez Percé delegation called on him, as a matter of course, and enjoyed his hospitality. The death of the two members occurred at his house. Let us hear what General Clark has to say on the purpose of the embassy. As we have not his direct testimony on the matter, we must elicit it from the testimony of others. William Walker Jr., a halfbreed of the Wyandotte nation, member of the Methodist Church, and government Indian Agent, came to St. Louis in 1832 and called on his chief, General Clark. Being told of three Indians from the West lying ill, in another room, he visited them at General Clark's request and learnt, as he himself states, that they had come 3000 miles on foot (should be 2000 miles on horse back) to consult their Great Father on very important matters.

William Walker professes to give General Clark's account of the motives that brought the Flat-Heads and Nez Percé to St. Louis. He does not say that they came to get the "Book" meaning the Bible, but rather to find out the truth about what they had heard concerning the Christian religion. From other sources we know, that General Clark sent them to the Catholic Cathedral for further information. He is quoted by Protestant authorities as saying: "The cause of the visit of the Indians was: Two of their number had received an education at some Jesuitical School in Montreal, Canada, and had returned to the tribe, and endeavored, as far as possible, to instruct their brethren how the whites approached the Great Spirit. A spirit of inquiry was aroused, a deputation was appointed, and a tedious journey of three thousand miles was performed to learn for themselves of Jesus and Him crucified."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Palladino, "Indian and White in the Northwest," Baltimore, 1894.

<sup>6</sup> E. W. Schon, Letter to "Christian Advocate," May 10, 1833. Cf. C. Goodman, "Trans-Mississippi West."

There are some who attribute the first knowledge of the Christian religion among the Nez Percé to Pierre C. Pambrun, a Roman Catholic. This gentleman certainly did spread the gospel among the Indians of Oregon but does not seem to have prior claims to the two Indians of whom both Bishop Rosati and General Clark give testimony.

But whatever persons, White or Indian, were instrumental in bringing the earliest knowledge of the Christian religion to the tribes on the Columbia River, it is plain that to them, Christianity meant Catholicity, and furthermore, that their instructions had fallen on good ground. Bancroft in the History of Oregon has a long note in further elucidation of the acknowledged fact, that the Flat-Heads were in the habit of placing a wooden cross at the head of the graves of their dead. He also gives a number of religious ideas and practices of the natives: "It will be remembered," says Bancroft, "that the Dalles people observed Sunday as a holiday, in the manner of the Catholic Church . . . So well advanced in the Christian religion were they (the Flat-Heads, Nez Percés and their neighbors), according to Bonneville, that they would not raise their camps on Sunday, nor fish, hunt or trade on that day, except in case of severe necessity, but pass a portion of the day in religious ceremonies, the chiefs leading the devotions and afterwards giving a sort of sermon upon abstaining from lying, stealing, cheating and quarrelling, and the duty of being hospitable to strangers. Prayers and exhortations were also made in the morning on week days . . . Besides Sundays they likewise observe the cardinal holidays of the Roman Catholic Church." Of the Flat-Heads John Wyeth, a companion of Captain Bonneville, says: "I have never known an instance of theft among them, neither have I known any quarrelling nor lying . . . They have a mild, playful, laughing disposition, and this is portrayed in their countenances. They are polite and unobtrusive. With all their quietness of spirit, they are brave when put to the test and are an overmatch for an equal number of Black Feet, their inveterate enemies." All these traits had been observed among the Flat-Heads and Nez Percé long before any missionary Catholic or Protestant, had been seen among them, and find their best, I may say their only satisfactory explanation in the fact that as early as 1816, Catholic Iroquois had instructed them, as best they could, in the tenets and practices of the Catholic religion.<sup>7</sup>

We have seen from the testimony so far adduced that two of the St. Louis party of four Flat-Heads and Nez Percé received Baptism at the hand of the priests of the St. Louis Cathedral and, having died, were buried with the Catholic rites. What became of the two remaining members of the embassy? In 1841 there appeared the celebrated work of George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners,*

---

<sup>7</sup> Bancroft, "History of Oregon," vol. I, pp. 116-118.

*Customs and Conditions of the North American Indians*, written during the eight years of travel from 1834-1839. Letter No. 48, in Volume II refers to these Indians, who as Catlin states, "were a part of a delegation that came across the Rocky Mountains to St. Louis a few years since to enquire for the truth of the representation which, they said, some white men had made amongst them, that our religion was better than theirs, and that they would all be lost, if they did not embrace it. Two old and venerable men of this party died in St. Louis, and I traveled 2000 miles (companion of these two young fellows) toward their own country, and became much pleased with their manners and dispositions. The last mentioned of the two died near the mouth of the Yellowstone River on his way home, with disease he had contracted in the civilized district; and the other one, I have since learned, arrived safely among his friends, conveying to them the melancholy intelligence of the deaths of all the rest of the party; but with assurances, at the same time, from General Clark and many Reverend gentlemen that the report which they had heard was well founded, and that missionaries—good and religious men—would soon come amongst them to teach this religion, so that they could all understand and have the benefits of it. When I first heard the report of the object of this extraordinary mission across the mountains I could scarcely believe it, but on conversing with General Clark on a later occasion, I was fully convinced of the fact."<sup>8</sup>

It will be seen that George Catlin's report of what he heard from the two surviving members of the Nez Percé and Flat-Head Indian delegation, agrees substantially with that of Bishop Rosati, except that the first bringers of Gospel tidings, according to Rosati, were "two Indians;" according to Catlin, "some white men;" but this difference is not necessarily contradictory, but rather complementary, in as far as some of the Indians may have first heard of the Christian religion from some Catholic woodranger or trader, whilst others depended for their information on their Iroquois friends from Canada. But the first deputation having failed in its attempt to get a Missionary from St. Louis, a second and then a third one was sent, and finally obtained the desired object of the Flat-Heads and Nez Percé. Of these three visits both Father Verhaegen, the Superior of the Jesuits, and Bishop Rosati have left us interesting accounts:

The Bishop's letter is dated St. Louis, October 20, 1839, and addressed to the Father General of the Society of Jesus at Rome:  
"Reverend Father:

Eight or nine years ago (1831) some of the Flat-Head nation came to St. Louis. The object of their journey was to ascertain if the religion spoken of with so much praise by the Iroquois warriors was

---

<sup>8</sup> Catlin, *op. citato*.

in reality such as represented, and above all, if the nations that have white skins had adopted and practiced it. Soon after their arrival in St. Louis they fell sick (two of them), called for a priest and earnestly asked to be baptized. Their request was promptly granted and they received the holy baptism with great devotion. Then holding the crucifix they covered it with affectionate kisses and expired.

"Some years after (1835) the Flat-Head nation sent again one of the Iroquois nation to St. Louis (Old Ignace). There he came with two of his children, who were instructed and baptized by the Fathers of the College. He asked missionaries for his countrymen and started with the hope that one day the desire of the nation would be accomplished, but on his journey was killed by the infidel Indians of the Sioux nation.

"At last," continued Bishop Rosati, "a third expedition (left-handed Peter and Young Ignace) arrived at St. Louis, after a voyage of three months. It was composed of two Christian Iroquois. These Indians, who talk French, have edified us by their truly exemplary conduct and interested us by their discourses. The Fathers of the College, have heard their confessions and today they approached the holy table at High Mass in the Cathedral church. Afterwards I administered to them the sacrament of Confirmation and in an address delivered after the ceremony I rejoiced with them at their happiness and gave them the hope to have soon a priest.

"They will depart tomorrow: one of them will carry the good news promptly to the Flat-Heads; the other will spend the winter at the mouth of the Bear River and in the spring he will continue his journey with the missionary whom we will send them. Of the twenty-four Iroquois who formerly emigrated from Canada only four are still living. Not only have they planted the faith in those wild countries, but they have besides defended it against the encroachment of the Protestant ministers. When these pretended missionaries presented themselves among them, our good Catholics refused to accept them. "These are not the priests about whom we have spoken to you," they would say to the Flat-Heads, "They are not the blackrobed priests who have no wives, who say Mass, who carry the crucifix with them." For the love of God my Very Reverend Father, do not abandon these souls!"<sup>9</sup>

The Jesuits of St. Louis nobly responded to this appeal of the Bishop, as Father Verhaegen indicates in his Report to the Prelates assembled in Council at Baltimore in May, 1830:

"We had it in contemplation to open a new mission among the Flat-Head Indians on the other side of the Rocky Mountains. During the administration of the Rt. Rev. Bishop Du Bourg (Rosati) a deputy from them arrived in St. Louis for the purpose of procuring a priest.

---

<sup>9</sup> Complete Letter in Palladino, op. cit., pp. 31 and 32.

This deputy died shortly after his arrival at this place. In 1835, a second deputation of a father and his two sons, reached the University of St. Louis. We could not, at that time, entertain the project, on account of the paucity of our numbers and the limited means at the disposal of the Superior of Missions. We therefore beheld with the deepest regret the deputies returning to their remote country without having accomplished their object. In the month of October 1839, a third deputation of two Indians, arrived at the University having the same object in view. Moved by the ardent desires of these distant and desolate children, who called so perseveringly for those who might break the bread of life to them we resolved to gratify their wishes and to send two Fathers in the Spring. The two deputies left St. Louis, full of joy at the happy prospect one of them remained at Westport, (now Kansas City) to await the arrival of the Fathers, the other returned to the nations beyond the Rocky Mountains, by whom he had been sent to report to them the success of his mission and to prepare a band of warriors with whom he was to return in the Spring to meet the missionaries and his companion at a designated point. At the opening of Spring, the time appointed for the fulfilment of our promise, when the Caravan of the Fur Company was about to start for the mountains, the want of the necessary funds rendered it impossible for us to send two Fathers. The scarcity of money was so great, that we could not obtain, or loan, the small amount of one thousand dollars, required for the outfit. In consequence of these difficulties we were enabled to send only one Father. He left us on the fifth of April to accompany the caravan of the Fur Company.<sup>10</sup>

The Jesuit Father was the celebrated Peter De Smet, "the greatest Indian Missionary of our age," as John O'Kane Murray calls him. He was at the time missionary to the Potawatomi of Council Bluffs, where he met the third delegation of the Flat-Heads. Father De Smet ascended the Missouri River in a steamboat, and after ten days voyage reached Westport a little town at the mouth of the Kansas, whence he was to cross the American desert to the Rocky Mountains and beyond.<sup>11</sup> The missionary wrote a graphic account of the various scenes he witnessed on this picturesque journey: the high wooded hills along the winding Missouri, the magnificent vistas that opened at every turn of the river and the wide open prairies extending for miles in all directions, filled with herds of buffalo; then the buffalo hunt, the frightful howling of wolves, feasting on the carcasses of the buffalos that had been left to them by the hunters; after that the veritable desert of sand and volcanic scoriae, extending to the foot of the mountains; and the slow ascent of the great divide to the summit

---

<sup>10</sup> Verhaegen to the Council, May 3, 1840, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>11</sup> Chittenden and Richardson, De Smet, vol. I, pp. 200 ss.

covered with petrifications; lastly the passage through the mountain fastnesses to the Wind River region where the missionary met a party of Shoshones, who rode up, three hundred strong, in full gallop, but in good order, dashed into the midst of the camp; Father De Smet made known to them the motive of his visit, and announced to the deeply interested warriors the principal points of the Christian religion. "Blackgown," one of the chiefs answered, "your words have entered our hearts: they will never go out from them." Yet, as they were about to make war on the Black Feet, their hereditary foes, this good resolution was not likely to produce lasting results.

Here also occurred the first meeting with a band of Flat-Heads who were to escort the missionary to their people. "Our meeting was not that of strangers but of friends:" wrote Father De Smet, "it was like children running to meet their father after a long absence."<sup>12</sup> On July 4th, the missionary resumed his travels with his Flat-Head band: ten Canadians also volunteered to accompany him. A good Fleming, Jean Baptist de Velder, an old grenadier of Napoleon, offered his services on the journey. On the 10th of July, the party reached the headwaters of the Columbia River, and following the mountain stream they at last came to the Camp of the Flat-Heads and Pend d'Oreilles. It contained about 1600 souls. All expressed their joy, the elders by shedding tears, the young men by leaps and shouts of happiness. The old chief, called in his language, "Big Face," received the long expected apostle with liveliest cordiality.

"Blackrobe, you are welcome in my nation. Today Kyleeyou (the Great Spirit) has fulfilled our wishes. Our hearts are big, for our great desire is gratified. You are in the midst of a poor and rude people, plunged in the darkness of ignorance. I have always exhorted my children to love Kyleeyou. We know that everything belongs to Him, and that our whole dependence is upon His liberal hand. From time to time good white men have given us good advice, and we have followed it; and in the eagerness of our hearts, to be taught everything that concerns our salvation, we have several times sent our people to the great Blackrobe at St. Louis (the Bishop) that he might send me a Father to speak with us. Blackrobe, we will follow the words of your mouth."<sup>13</sup>

"Every morning at daybreak," as Father De Smet tells us, "the old chief was the first to rise; then mounting a horse he rode up and down the camp to harangue his people. This is a custom he has always observed, and I think it has kept these Indians in the great unity and admirable simplicity that are observed among them. These 1,600 persons thanks to his fatherly care and good advice,

<sup>12</sup> Chittenden and Richardson, vol. I, p. 220.

<sup>13</sup> Chittenden and Richardson, vol. I, p. 224.

seemed to form but a single family, in which order and charity reigned in a truly suprising manner. "Come, courage, my children" he cried, "open your eyes. Address your first thoughts and words to the Great Spirit. Tell Him that you love Him, and ask Him to take pity on you. Courage! for the sun is about to appear, it is time you went to the river to wash yourselves. Be prompt at our Father's lodge, at the first sound of the bell; be quiet when you are there; open your ears to hear and your hearts to hold fast all the words that he says to you." Then he would administer fatherly rebukes for anything, he and the other chiefs had observed that was out of order in their conduct the day before. At the voice of this old man, whom all love and respect like a tender father, they would hasten to arise; all would be in motion in the village, and in a few minutes the banks of the river would be covered with people.

When all were ready, I rang the bell for prayer, and from the first day to the last they continued to show the same avidity to hear God's word. Their eagerness was so great that they would run to get a good place; even the sick got themselves carried thither."<sup>14</sup>

As the Indians removed their camp to Henry's Lake one of the principal sources of the Columbia River, Father De Smet accompanied them. On July 24th, they crossed the mountain to Red Rock Lake, the ultimate source of the Missouri. Here the Flat-Heads laid in their winter supply of buffalo meat. Father De Smet accompanied their four hundred horsemen on their hunting expedition. August 27th, was set by the missionary for his departure for St. Louis. All the nation was assembled, in silent sorrow. The Father performed the morning prayer with them amid the sobs of the women and children. Then promising once more that he would return to them, he started on the homeward trail, accompanied by a small body guard of Indians and his faithful Fleming. For several days the journey passed through the Yellowstone Bottom, where the party met several bands of friendly Crow Indians. Coming at last to the farthest outpost of civilization, a fort of the Fur Company, Father De Smet parted from his faithful Flat-Heads, and started for Council Bluffs which he reached on November 24th, happy to find himself in company of Fathers Hoecken and Verreydt once more. Departing from Council Bluffs on December 14th, he reached his brethren in St. Louis on New Year's Eve having completed a journey of 2000 Flemish leagues.

Father De Smet had promised his dear Flat-Heads that he would return to them in the Spring: and he was as good as his word. The winter he spent in collecting funds for the proposed mission. The good people of Philadelphia and New Orleans, were the main contributors to the noble cause. Pittsburg and St. Louis were good seconds.

---

<sup>14</sup> Chittenden and Richardson, vol. I, p. 225.

The fellow laborers allotted to Father De Smet were five: Father Nicholas Point of La Vendee, Father Gregory Mengarini, recently sent from Rome in answer to Bishop Rosati's appeal, and the lay-brothers William Claessens, Charles Huet and Joseph Specht. On April 23rd, the missionary band left St. Louis for Westport, and passing through the lands of the Shawnees and Delawares, they visited the Kansas Indians. White Plume, the great chief of Father Lutz's days, gave them a hearty greeting.<sup>15</sup>

It was on the Festival of the Assumption that Father De Smet's party met the vanguard of the Flat-Heads. With renewed vigor the entire party pushed on until from a promontory on the mountain pass they could descry the Oregon country in all its Spring-time beauty. At last they came within sight of the camp, and the head chief, Big Face, hurried out to meet them, and to introduce them to his people. "This evening," says Father De Smet, "was certainly one of the happiest of my life." After many prospecting excursions, and long and serious consideration, the banks of the Bitter Root River were chosen as the site of the principal missionary station. The buildings were put up by the brothers according to the plans of Father Point. The Indians were employed in cutting stakes for enclosing the entire settlement. Baptisms in great numbers were administered, marriages were solemnized or validated, instructions were given regularly: neighboring tribes sent petitions for missionaries to visit them, the Catechism was translated into the Flat-Head tongue, and one hundred and fifty persons were being prepared for first Communion. The Mission of St. Mary was the name of the new foundation. It was but the beginning and promise of a glorious future.<sup>16</sup>

It was a strange coincidence, yet one of the benign dispensations of Divine Providence that, whilst this great work for the upbuilding of the Church of God beyond the Rocky Mountains was carried on from St. Louis, a similar expedition was sent out from Canada to the Oregon coast. Archbishop Signay of Quebec in 1838, appointed Father Francis Norbert Blanchet, Vicar General of Oregon, and gave him Father Modestus Demers as his companion. Both set out for Fort Van Couver, reaching it November 24th, of the same year. Father De Smet paid a visit to him on his return from Europe around Cape Horn, bringing a number of Sisters of Notre Dame from Namur, for an Indian school. In the meantime Father Peter De Vos, and Adrian Hoecken, brother of Christian Hoecken and Brother McGean had joined the missionaries at St. Mary's. With this change of jurisdiction the

---

<sup>15</sup> For White Plume, cf. Chittenden and Richardson, *op. cit.*, pp. 283 and 284.

<sup>16</sup> For an account of St. Mary's Mission, see Chittenden and Richardson, *op. cit.*, pp. 315 ss.

Oregon Missions ceased to form a part of St. Louis diocese. In 1843, (Dec. 1st.) Oregon became a Vicariate Apostolic with Bishop Francis Norbert Blanchet in charge.

It would be a most pleasant task to sketch the origin and the early triumphs and vicissitudes of the Oregon missions: yet that subject is a very wide one, and has been ably treated by such historians, as Father Palladino, Bishop Blanchet, Father Van Rensselaer Ronan, Chittenden and Richardson, and by the Founder, Father De Smet himself. These authors give us a comprehensive view of the grandest missionary work of the nineteenth century in its religious, social, economical and political aspect. In regard to its civilizing influence I would quote the generous words of a man, who for many years held the highest position of honor and trust our State could confer, and whose name is enrolled among the truly great men of the nation, Senator George G. Vest. He had been appointed a member of a Special Committee sent out to investigate the Indian Reservations in the West. On May 12th, 1884, the question as to the appropriation for the schools came up in the United States Senate, and the Senator from Missouri made his report in an impressive speech, from which this quotation is taken:

"In all my wanderings in Montana last summer I saw but one ray of light on the subject of Indian education . . . the system adopted by the Jesuits is the only practical system for the education of the Indian, and the only one that has resulted in anything at all."

Realizing that there was an anti-Catholic feeling at the bottom of the opposition to the Jesuit Schools, Senator Vest thought proper to state his own position in regard to the Catholic religion:

"The Jesuits have elevated the Indian wherever they have been allowed to do so, without interference by bigotry and fanaticism and the cowardice of insectivorous politicians, who are afraid of the A. P. A., and the votes that can be cast against them in their districts and their states. They have made him a Christian, and, above even that, they have made him a workman, able to support himself and those dependent upon him. Go to the Flat-Head Reservation in Montana and look from the cars of the Northern Pacific Railroad, and you will see the result of what Father De Smet and his associates began and what was carried on successfully until the A. P. A. and the cowards who are afraid of it, struck down the appropriation.

Go through this reservation and look at the work of the Jesuits, and what is seen? You find comfortable dwellings, herds of cattle and horses, intelligent self-respecting Indians. I have been to their houses and found under the system adopted by the Jesuits, that after they have educated these boys and girls, and they had intermarried, the Jesuits would go out and break up a piece of land and build them a house, and that couple became the nucleus of civilization in the neighborhood. They had been educated under the system which pre-

vented them from going back to the tepee after a day's tuition. The Jesuits found that in order to accomplish their purpose of teaching them how to work and depend upon themselves, it was necessary to keep them in school, a boarding school by day and night, and to allow their parents to see them only in presence of brothers or the nuns.

I wish to say now what I have said before in the Senate, and it is not the popular side of the question by any means, that I did not see in all my journey which lasted for several weeks, a single school that was doing any educational work worthy the name of educational work, unless it was under the control of the Jesuits."

## THE POTAWATOMI MISSION OF SUGAR CREEK

The very year of the foundation of the Potawatomi Mission near Council Bluffs was to witness the third great immigration of Potawatomi, mostly Catholics, coming from the neighborhood of St. Joseph's, on the southern shore, of Lake Michigan. Let us hear what Father Verhaegen has to say about this matter:

"In the same year (1838), six hundred Catholic Potawatomi from Indiana, who were accompanied in their removal by the late Rev. Father Petit, on reaching their destination were transferred by him to the care of one of our Fathers. Their location is on the banks of Sugar Creek, about seventy miles southwest of the Kickapoo station. This is the most flourishing of all the Indian missions and realizes the accounts, which we read of the missions of Paraguay.

A letter of the missionary, received in January last, states that on Christmas one hundred and fifty approached the sacred table and all who could be spared from domestic duties assisted with great devotion at the three solemn Masses, the first at midnight, the second at daybreak and the third at 10:30. There is but one Father at present at the station, and as his presence is almost always required among his six hundred Catholics, he cannot make frequent excursions to the neighboring tribes. His catechists, however, perform this duty for him, and often return with several adults ready to receive baptism. The details of this mission would form a lengthy and interesting article, we cannot properly find place in a mere report."<sup>1</sup>

St. Joseph's Mission, on the St. Joseph River, at South Bend, Indiana, was founded by Father Claude Allouez S. J. before 1711; for, at that period Father John Chardon, S. J. became his successor. It was then known as the Miami Mission. The nation of the Potawatomi is noteworthy in our literary history as having given to Longfellow the matter of his *Hiawatha*. Their traditions were first recorded by Father De Smet in his *Oregon Missions*. The "Pontonatomies," as spelled by French writers, were mentioned since 1639: In 1641 they were at Sault Ste. Marie's, fleeing before the Sioux; in 1668 they were all on the Potawatomi Islands in Green Bay. In 1721 the bulk of the nation was still on their islands; one band was at Detroit,

---

<sup>1</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

another on the St. Joseph's River (South Bend, Indiana) These latter are the people led to the West by Father Petit.<sup>2</sup>

Their last missionary of the pre-banishment Jesuits was Father De la Morinie, who was forced to seek shelter at the mission of Kaskaskia and for a while attended the newly founded Church of Ste. Genevieve, until he with the members of the Illinois Mission was banished from the country in 1763. The mission was reopened in 1830 by the venerable Father Stephan Badin, and a large number of converts were made among the Indians.

His successor Father Louis Deseilles having died at the altar of Ste. Marie du Lac, among his dear Indians, was in turn succeeded by Father Benjamin Marie Petit, the last of the Indian Missionaries in Indiana. Father Petit was born, at Rennes in France, April 8th, 1811, attended the college of his native city for the study of law, and had already attained the position of advocate when, in 1835, Bishop Simon Bruté, of Vincennes, arrived at Rennes and confirmed the hopeful young man in his determination to become a missionary in America. Arriving at Vincennes in 1836, the youthful Petit was raised to the priesthood in October 1837. His first and only appointment was to the Indian mission in the region around South Bend, Indiana, where he remained until September 1838. Hence, Father Petit accompanied the Potawatomi on their exile to the Far West, and died on his homeward journey in St. Louis, February 10th, 1839, not quite twenty-eight years old, but full of merit.

Father Petit's arrival among the Potawatomi, brought forth shouts of joy from the Indians: "We were as orphans and, as it were, in darkness, but you! come among us and we live." Full of holy zeal the young missionary shared with joy the poverty and anguish of his people over whom a heavy doom was lowering. That very year of his coming, 1837, was to witness the barbarous expulsion of the Forest Potawatomi, as his Indians were called, from their native haunts. "I shall have to level the altar and the church to the ground and bury the cross which overshadows their tombs to save it from profanation," he cried out in the anguish of his heart. And then he recalls the beautiful Christian traits of his forlorn people:

"At sundown the whole congregation assembled for catechetical instruction and night prayer. Many of them had the practice of frequent communion, but since the death of Father Deseilles until my coming they had to be content with spiritual communion. I have already baptized eighteen converts and solemnized seven marriages. Their zeal for religion is most beautiful to witness. They will leave their homes

---

2 Cf. "Wisconsin Historical Collection," vol. III, p. 136.

to visit and instruct anyone, no matter how far away, of whom they have learned that he had desired to become a Christian.”<sup>3</sup>

In his letter to Bishop Bruté, dated July 9th, 1838, Father Petit speaks of his joy at finding himself able to understand and speak the language of his people; and at the end of his letter expresses a desire to be permitted to accompany them to their new destination. Since Easter, 1838, he had baptized one hundred and two Indian converts. At length the sad day of parting arrived. On September 14th, 1838, Father Petit writes:

“I have read my last Mass at Chicsipe-Outipe. After Mass my dear little chapel was stripped of all its ornaments, and I gathered my children around me for the hour of departure. I shed tears, my Indians cried aloud; it was heart-rending. We, a dying mission, prayed for the prosperity of the other missions and sang:

“In thy protection do we trust,  
O Virgin, meek and mild.”

“The leader’s voice was broken with sobbing; but few could carry the song to its end. I had to leave. It is very sad for a missionary to witness the death of what he had loved. A few days later I learned that the Indians, in spite of their peaceful disposition, had been attacked and made prisoners of war. Under pretence of a council they had been brought together, when suddenly they were surrounded by the military, 800 in number, and put under restraint. The government at the same time extending an invitation to me to accompany them to their destination, as the separation from their priest was one of the reasons of their unwillingness to depart. I answered that I could do nothing without consent of my Bishop, and that he had refused permission, in order to remove all suspicion, that the church authorities had consented to the harsh measures adopted by the government. But the dispensation of Providence is wonderful. Bishop Bruté was expected at Logansport on September 7th to dedicate the new church; and on the same day my Indian children were to camp near Logansport on their way to the Mississippi. On the morning of September 5th, the Bishop entered my room at South Bend and asked me to accompany him to Logansport. I was quiet as a man who does not move under an oppressive weight. We departed together. On the way we learned that the Indians, who were urged on to quicker movement at the point of the bayonet, had a number of sick people with them; several of

---

<sup>3</sup> Petit to Bruté. The letters of Father Petit to Bishop Bruté were published in vol. VII of the “*Annales de l’Association de la Propagation de la Foi*,” for August. They were translated into German for Father Theodore Bruenner’s “*Kirchengeschichte Quincy’s*,” 1887. The English Translation is our own.

them on the wagons having already died of heat and thirst. These reports were like a dagger piercing my heart. The Bishop now gave his consent that I join the Indians on their sad exodus; on condition, however, that I return as soon as another priest could be provided. I feared at first that I would not be permitted to enter the camp without special permission. All the Indians, however, came out to receive my blessing. The Americans were surprised at this. "This man," said the General "has greater influence here than I". I had free entrance everywhere.

"On the afternoon of September 9th Bishop Bruté, came to the camp and confirmed twenty of my people. It was a beautiful day of triumph for the Catholic Faith. On the following day I brought my luggage from South Bend, and am now on the march to found a new mission for my barbarians, 400 miles to the west."<sup>4</sup>

Why the military acted so harshly in carrying out the sufficiently harsh measures of the government is not clear, except on the supposition that some of them were far more barbarous than the barbarians themselves, these gentle children of the one-time wilderness. But these Indians were Catholics and, therefore, their sufferings passed unnoticed by the great world. On November 13th, 1837, Father Petit continues his report to Bishop Bruté. His letter is dated from Osage River, Indiana County (Kansas): "On September 12, I returned to Logansport having to catch up with the emigrants at Lafayette, but the march was accelerated so much, that I did not see them, even from afar, until I came to Danville. They were marching along the right bank of the river, whilst the wagon train followed on the left bank. It was Sunday, September 16th. I had just arrived, when a Colonel rode up for the purpose of selecting the location for a camp. Shortly afterward I saw my Christians approaching through the heat of midday, amid a cloud of dust and surrounded by the soldiery urging them on to renewed effort. Then came the wagon train with the numerous sick and the children and women heaped pellmell on the carts. The camp was about half an hour's walk from the city, and in a little more than that time I was with them. It was a heart-breaking spectacle. Sick and dying people everywhere; almost all the children were in a state of utter exhaustion and unconsciousness. The General expressed his pleasure at seeing me, and gallantly offered me a chair, the only one he had. This was the first night spent under a tent. Early next morning the sick Indians were placed in the wagons; all the others mounting their horses. Just before starting, Judge Polk, the commander-in-chief, came up and offered me a saddle horse which the government had hired from an Indian,

---

<sup>4</sup> Petit to Bruté, September 14, 1838.

but the Indian approached and said: "My Father, I give you the horse, saddled and bridled as it is." We then started for a new camp, when a longer rest was promised us. At my request the authorities set at liberty the six Indian chiefs, who had until now been treated as prisoners of war. The order of march was now as follows: The U. S. Flag was carried at the head of the column by a dragoon, followed by some of the chief officers; then came the wagon train of the General Staff, then the wagons used by the Indian chiefs. After that came 250 to 300 horses, with men, women and children, riding in single file after the manner of the Indians, under guard of dragoons and volunteers, who continually urged on the cavalcade with bitter words and taunts. Now came about 40 wagons with the luggage of the Indians, and the sick Indians crowded on top of the luggage. Here the poor creatures lay, continually shaken up, under a canvas cover that was intended to shelter them against the heat of the sun, but served only to deprive them of fresh air; literally buried alive under the burning cover. A few of them died under the torment. We encamped about six miles from Danville. Then I had the happiness, for two successive days, to say holy Mass surrounded by my children. I administered the holy sacrament to several in preparation for death and baptized a few infants and, when we left this camp after our two days' rest, we left behind six graves with crosses at their head. At Danville the General gave furlough to his little army, and departed. He had promised to do so immediately after my advent. Soon we found ourselves on the vast prairies of Illinois, moving from one camp to another under a broiling sun against which there was no shelter; they are immeasurable like the ocean, and the eye wearies itself to discover a tree in its immensity. No drop of water is to be found there. The journey was a real torment for the poor sick, some of whom died almost every day from exhaustion and fatigue. But all this misery did not prevent us from reciting our night prayers in common, and the Americans, who were led by curiosity to visit us were astonished to find so much piety among so many trials. It frequently happened that some fifteen to twenty Indians sat around a fire before a tent that was illumined by a single wax candle, singing hymns and reciting the rosary all night; it meant that one of their friends had died, and his corpse lay now in the tent. Thus they showed him their love and honor. On the following morning a grave was dug, the sorrowing family, without a tear in their eyes, however, remained at the place after the others had departed; the priest blessed the grave and cast the first shovelful of clay on the poor coffin; then a mound was raised over the dead and a little cross placed upon it. On some Sundays, when the lack of drinking water forced us to march on, a time of grace of two hours was granted to me, during

which I might perform my religious duties. The Indians attended holy Mass, during which they sang their hymns so sweetly, that all visitors were filled with wonderment. To my taste, some of their songs had a very beautiful melody. I then preached a sermon on the Gospel, requested all to recite the Rosary on the way and gathered my belongings. The tents were struck, the horses were mounted, and on we marched to the next encampment. As a rule there was no marching on Sundays. The morning prayers and an instruction preceded the Mass. Vespers were chanted in the Indian tongue. Then came the Rosary and a brief sermon; the latter I sometimes preached in Indian without an interpreter. The respect shown me by Catholics along the way is above praise. . .

"I was again attacked by fever, about two or three days' journey this side of the Illinois River. Here an old Frenchman came to the camp and made me promise, with many importunities, to take a few days' rest at his home. The next morning he came with a wagon to convey me away, but I had to decline the invitation for fear I might not be able to catch up with my emigrants if I remained behind. When we arrived at Naples, where we crossed the Illinois River, a Protestant gentleman who had been married to a Catholic Frenchwoman at Vincennes, and who had heard that there was a sick priest among the Indians, came to offer me his home for the time of my stay. I accepted this invitation and through the great care lavished upon me, I got rid of the fever. At Naples I took the stage coach and hurried on to Quincy. There I found a German priest, Father Brickwedde, and a German Congregation, who all received me with indescribable affection. The same friendly treatment was accorded to me by some Catholic Americans and by a few of the most prominent Protestants of the city. When the Indians arrived at Quincy, the inhabitants, who had seen other emigrating tribes pass through their city, could not contain their admiration of the modesty, the quiet and good behavior of our Christians. A Catholic lady, accompanied by a Protestant friend, made the sign of the cross. Immediately the Indian women ran up to her and grasped her hand and shook it most heartily. The Protestant lady tried also to make the sign of the cross, but made a poor showing at it. One of the Indian women approached her saying, "You nothing," And she was right. . ."<sup>5</sup>

At Quincy the Indians crossed the Mississippi and wandered from camp to camp through Northern Missouri, ever westward across the Missouri boundary to the headwaters of the Osage River, in the

---

<sup>5</sup> Petit to Bruté, November 13, 1838.

present State of Kansas, then but a part of the vast Indian Territory. Father Petit's letter comes to a conclusion:

"One day's journey from the Osage River I was met by Father Hoecken, S. J. He speaks both the Potawatomi and the Kickapoo languages. He told me of his purpose to leave the land of the Kickapoo and to take up his abode among my Christians. Thus Your Grace will see that your purpose as well as mine is attained. Your Grace sought nothing but the honor of God and the salvation of these poor Christians; I sought nothing else. Having departed on September 4th, we arrived November 4th. The number of our Indians at their departure amounted to 800; some have deserted and many died. I do not think there were, at our arrival, more than 650 souls."<sup>6</sup>

Father Petit fell sick once more; the effects of the fever and the terrible privations and hardships were partly counteracted by the tender care of Father Hoecken. On January 2, 1839, Father Petit started for Vincennes, but was again taken ill on the way, and died at St. Louis, a martyr to duty, as Bishop Bruté called him, cheered and comforted by the pious care of the Jesuit Fathers and the visits of Bishops Rosati and Loras. His death occurred on February 11th, 1839.

A temporary chapel was raised near the banks of the river, called Potawatomi Creek. After the departure of Father Petit, Father Hoecken remained with these Indians for a time alone, until the Rev. Father P. Aelen joined him as his assistant, April 26th, 1839. On May 10th, the entire multitude of the faithful removed to the river commonly called Sugar Creek, but renamed by us St. Mary's Creek, there to have their permanent home. A new church was erected in this place under the title "*Conceptio Beatae Mariae Virgins.*" Father Hoecken adds a note to this report as follows:

"The Indians under my care are of good disposition and fervent, some of them were confirmed by Bishop Bruté before their western migration. But as they come from Indiana, they were never under the decrees of the Sacred Synod of Trent (i. e. the *Ne Temere* Decree) concerning marriages, consequently they are not subject to the proclamation of the banns. Besides, the Indian mode of contracting marriage is altogether different from that of other nations; and lastly they do not like to have their names proclaimed in church, because they are very much inclined to bashfulness, so much so, that at times they can scarcely speak, so shamefaced they are."<sup>7</sup>

The holy death of Father Petit obtained for the new Potawatomi Mission a house of the Sacred Heart. Mother Duchesne, who had been

---

<sup>6</sup> Petit to Bruté.

<sup>7</sup> Hoecken to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

deeply moved by this narrative, wrote as follows to Mother Barat: "On the frontier of the State of Missouri, not far from the towns of Portland, Liberty and Independence, there is a good tribe of Indians, banished from Indiana, and for the most part Christians; a holy Breton priest, M. Petit, devoted himself to these poor people; his life was worn out in their service, and he has died like a saint in the college of St. Louis. His dear flock he committed to the care of a Jesuit Father, who has since been to see us."<sup>8</sup>

Mother Duchesne, whose real motive in coming to America was to serve God in the conversion of the children of the far western wilderness, but whose holy desire was ever frustrated by other more imperious calls of duty, now at last in her old age saw her opportunity. She begged Bishop Rosati, who was then in France, to intercede with Mother Barat for this last favor, that she might be permitted to go to the Potawatomi Indians on Sugar Creek. "If I did not know You, "the saintly Bishop answered," I should say, it was too much. But I do know you and so I say: Go. Follow your inspiration, or rather the voice of God. He will be with you."<sup>9</sup> On the feast of the Epiphany 1841 she made a formal application on the subject to her Superiors:

"If we had only four hundred piastres to begin with, she wrote to Mother Gallitzin we could go in the spring. Our large houses in Louisiana might really look on that little sum as a trifle in comparison with the great expenses of their buildings, which might well spare something of their beauty for the glory of God and in order to provide what is indispensable for our poor Indians."<sup>10</sup>

Father De Smet collected the four hundred piastres and handed them to the Mother Visitor for the enterprise. The matter of a new House in the far west was decided, only the question as to whether the venerable Mother Duchesne in her feeble state of health should take part in the venture, remained undecided until Mother General, the venerated Mother Barat, wrote: "It was on account of the savages that Mother Duchesne felt inspired to undertake this work of founding the Order in America." Mother Duchesne's letter of thanks to Mother General overflowed with holy joy and hope:

"There are half-castes there who are saints, and great saints also among the savages. A spirit exists in that mission unknown elsewhere. The faith of these simple Christians is such that it reminds one of the early days of the Church."<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Baunard-Fullerton, "Mother Philippine Du Chesne," p. 358

<sup>9</sup> Rosati to Mother Du Chesne.

<sup>10</sup> Baunard-Fullerton, "Mother Du Chesne," p. 361.

<sup>11</sup> Baunard-Fullerton, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

Madame Lucille Mathevon, Superior of St. Charles, offered herself for the service of the new foundation, and was appointed its first Superior. Madame O'Connor, an Irish nun that spoke both English and French, volunteered to join the Mission, as also did Louisa Amyot, a Canadian sister. Mother Duchesne was growing weaker and weaker, the doctor said, that she was in constant danger of death. It almost seemed a duty to prevent her departure on the long and tiresome voyage. But Father Verhaegen, who was to be at the head of the traveling party, insisted upon it, that Mother Duchesne was to be accepted. "If she cannot work," he said, "She will forward the success of the mission by her prayers." Presents of money and linen came in from various houses of the Sacred Heart. The departure for Sugar Creek took place by boat on the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Four days afterwards the party landed at Westport: the rest of the journey was made in wretched carriages over still more wretched roads: but at last on July 9th, 1841, they reached the territory of the Potawatomi. Their village stood eighteen miles farther west.

Early the next morning, as the caravan started on the last lap of the journey, the eyes of the Sisters were treated to a spectacle, such as they had never seen or ever dreamt of. Groups of Indians on horseback were stationed at intervals on the road to show the way, and suddenly, at the entrance of a boundless prairie, a band of one hundred and fifty Indians appeared, riding horses magnificently caparisoned, and waving above the many-colored plumes of their head-dresses red and white flags. In the midst of this cavalcade the carriages of the nuns drove on, the men of the tribe executing all sorts of figures, and firing guns in the air.<sup>12</sup>

When at last the cavalcade arrived at the mission house, and all were seated on benches in the open, Father Verhaegen presented Mother Duchesne to the wondering savages, saying: "My children, here is a lady who for thirty-five years has been asking God to let her come to You." The chief's wife then addressed Mother Duchesne and her companions: "To show You our joy, all the women of the tribe, married and unmarried, will now embrace You. "Mother Duchesne and the others Sisters graciously accepted the compliment in the spirit in which it was offered."<sup>13</sup>

Sugar Creek presented a remarkable contrast with the neighboring Indian settlements. "Half of the people here," Mother Duchesne wrote, "are Catholics, and live in a separate village from the heathens, who are being gradually converted. When once they have been baptized,

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Baunard-Fullerton, *op. cit.*, p. 365.

<sup>13</sup> Baunard-Fullerton, p. 366.

they leave off stealing and drinking; all the houses are left open, but nothing is ever stolen. The Potawatomi assemble every morning for prayers, Mass, and instruction, and the same for night prayers.”<sup>14</sup>

At first the Sisters lived in a hut given them by one of the Indians. They opened their school on July 19th, the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul. The church was near by. In August their house was completed and occupied. Father Aelen gave them two cows, a horse and a pair of oxen: and so the new institution was in working order. Fifty girls frequented the school.

“As soon as we could,” Madame Mathevon says, “we taught our Indians the prayers of the Church, and especially the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, as it is sung on Sundays after Vespers. Soon our cabin could not hold all our scholars, and we made a large room with green branches. Our children are very intelligent, and understand easily all we teach them. They are as handy as possible with their fingers.”<sup>15</sup>

This new surroundings of piety and poverty seemed to give new strength to Mother Duchesne. She wrote to her sister: “My health has much improved here, I have gained strength, my sight is clearer, and in spite of my seventy-three years, I enjoy the use of all my faculties.”<sup>16</sup>

It was not the renewal of bodily health and vigor, but rather the spirit triumphant over all the ills of life. Yet the Superior feared that the austerities of the missionary calling were undermining what was left of health and vigor, and felt bound to recall her to the quiet and calm of St. Charles. But even here she continually thought about her dear savages. Ten years were here added to her span of existence, full of prayer and patient suffering, though no longer of labors. Her beloved houses of St. Charles and Florissant were threatened with suppression. But the danger was averted. She rejoiced to see the good work that had been begun by her in 1818 spread far and wide in America and even beyond its bounds: and yet she could sincerely confess her life a failure: “I myself have never succeeded in any of my labors: but God gave me the grace to rejoice in the success of others.”<sup>17</sup>

The servant of God died on November 1852, in the 83rd year of her life. Father Aelen in his report of 1839 to Bishop Rosati contains the following information on the distribution of the Catholic Indians under his care:

---

<sup>14</sup> Baunard-Fullerton, p. 366.

<sup>15</sup> Baunard-Fullerton, p. 367.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, p. 369.

<sup>17</sup> Baunard, “Madam Barat,” German translation, p. 572.

"The Potawamoi Mission south of the Mer des Cygnes (Lake of the Swans) sometimes called Osage River. This mission extends itself to all the various bands of that nation, scattered all over their lands. Some of the faithful live on the right bank of the Mer des Cygnes; a considerable number on both banks of the so-called Potawatomi Creek, and about 400 in a southward direction on the banks of the so-called Sugar Creek. Here is the residence of the attending clergyman, the Rev. H. G. Aelen, S. J., and a church under the invocation of the Bl. V. M. This mission is very flourishing, and no less than 60 adults have been baptized during the last eight months, or from the time that the nation has begun to settle on their lands.'"<sup>18</sup>

From this flourishing center the Ottawas and Miamis were regularly visited by Father Aelen, and the Kickapoo Station by Father Eysvogels, who also took into his circuit the rising towns of Liberty and Plattsburg. Father Hoecken, not content with securing the spiritual interests of his people, endeavored also to elevate their social condition, by inspiring them with a love of honest labor. He extended his missionary excursions to the Sioux, Ricarees, Mandans, and Assiniboines of whom he baptized about four hundred."

After 1848 the mission among the Osages was renewed under the title of St. Francis Hieronymo by the Jesuit Fathers John Shoenmakers and John Bax, with the Sisters of Loretto conducting the school. In that year the Chicago Potawatomi, or the United Nation of the Ottawa, Chippewa and Potawatomi, were removed from Council Bluffs and settled on their lands on the Kansas River in the neighborhood of the Sugar Creek Mission. The mission was blessed with extraordinary good results. When the old Indian Territory in 1851, was erected into a Vicariate Apostolic under the Jesuit Bishop John Baptist Miege, the Potawatomi Mission became his Episcopal residence.

Father Christian Hoecken, who thus received through Father Petit's consecrated hands, the heritage of the earlier Jesuit's treasure of Catholic souls, and who was privileged to introduce the saintly Mother Duchesne to the fervently desired Indian Mission, was born in Upper Brabant, and was, at this time, only twenty-eight years of age. He was the companion of Father Van Quickenborne in founding and conducting the Kickapoo Mission. At the suppression of this first Indian establishment west of the Mississippi he was transferred to the Potawatomi Mission on the Osage River and on Sugar Creek. He spoke the languages of both tribes, the Kickapoo and the Potawatomi and understood their manners, prejudices and predilections. The Indians conceived a profound veneration for him. "He was," as Father De Smet testifies,

---

<sup>18</sup> Aelen's Report to Bishop Rosati, 1839.

“To all of them, their father in Christ, their physician in illness, their counsel in difficulties, their sincere and faithful friend. When he could share anything with his poor neophytes, he rejoiced with all the simplicity of a child. His only consolation was to be among them.”<sup>19</sup> He died of cholera on the 19th day of June 1851, on the great journey undertaken in company of Father De Smet to the Great Desert. Both were attacked by the virulent disease, but Father De Smet recovered. Father Hoecken, “the martyr of duty,” as Father De Smet called him, was buried near the mouth of the Little Sioux River, but later on brought to Florissant. There his mortal remains repose near the grave of the last Jesuit Missionary of the Illinois, Father Sebastian Meurin. Archbishop Peter Richard Kenrick, in a brief obituary published in the *Shepherd of the Valley*, thus sums up the noble character of Father Christian Hoecken: “The qualities which most distinguished him amid his labors and privations were his admirable frankness, his simplicity, his sound judgment, and ever-joyous and peaceful disposition of mind and heart, and an imperturable contentment, which the author of this notice has never found to the same degree in any individual.”<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> De Smet, “Western Missions and Missionaries,” p. 65.

<sup>20</sup> “Shepherd of the Valley,” July, 1851.

## EARLY CHURCH-FOUNDATIONS IN CENTRAL MISSOURI

The succession of counties west of St. Louis and Jefferson, along the windings of the muddy Missouri, Franklin, Gasconade, then comprising Osage, Maries, Gasconade, and lastly the County of Cole, the proud possessor of the State Capital, Jefferson City, formed the favorite missionary field of the Jesuits in Missouri after the establishment of their University in the chief city of the State. Of course, their labors extended to a far wider territory, on the north side of the river. But the district circumscribed here was a compact and almost homogeneous unit, in as far as the Church was concerned; most of the early settlers being one in religion and nationality: Catholic emigrants from Bavaria, Baden, the Rhineland, Westphalia, and Hanover. Westphalia in what is now called Osage County was for a time the center of the various missions.

"The Germans are most numerous in the neighborhood of Jefferson City," wrote Father Verhaegen in 1837. "People have assured us there are almost fifty Catholic families there. They are pious and in better circumstances than those of Washington."<sup>1</sup>

This was the colony of Catholic Westphalians and Rhinelanders from Northern Germany, that in 1835 had formed a settlement on the Big Maries, a tributary of the Osage River. Some of the immigrants were men of classical education, as Dr. Bruns, Mr. Bartmann and others. One of their number, Mr. Hesse, made a valuable map of the Maries County settlements, and a book on "Western North-America."

As a village grew up they named it Westphalia. A Catholic priest, Rev. Henry Meinkmann, came among them with a party of Rhinelanders, but, being debarred from holding services, for lack of credentials, employed his time and talent in teaching school. When Father Verhaegen in 1837 paid a visit to the colony, he inquired into the circumstances of Father Meinkmann's case and reported them to Bishop Rosati: "Father Henry Meinkmann of the diocese of Münster in Germany was ordained in 1829, at Lucerne in Switzerland. For three years prior to his coming to America in 1836, he exercised the ministry at Capellen and at Hinsbeck in Münster. On relinquishing this post he obtained commendatory letters from the curé of Hinsbeck: but on soliciting a document of like tenor from the Vicar-General of the diocese of Münster, was assured by that

---

<sup>1</sup> Verhaegen to Rosati, November 17, 1837, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

official, apparently in good faith, that no credentials other than those furnished by the curé of Hinsbeck would be found necessary in America. Father Meinkmann applied to Bishop Rosati for faculties in April 1837, but received a curt refusal, because he could not show dimissorial letters from the Bishop of Münster. All that the poor priest could do was to go with his party of immigrants and to wait until the clouds should be cleared away. Father Helias thought well of him; calling him "that Israelite in whom there is no guile.

"The Germans of Westphalia," wrote Father Verhaegen to the Bishop, "said many fine things about the good priest of whom Father Helias speaks: but those of more influence among them observed to me that he would not suit, as he could not wield over them the authority and influence which the Sacred Ministry requires and this for the reason that he has resided so long among them without the usual powers of a priest, merely as a school-teacher, etc."<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime Father Meinkmann had received his canonical exeat from the diocese of Münster: whereupon Bishop Rosati granted him faculties for Westphalia Settlement as resident pastor. A small wooden chapel was then erected on the north side of the Maries River, and dedicated to St. John the Baptist.

But, as Father Verhaegen had intimated to the Bishop, Father Meinkmann's stay at Westphalia Settlement was foredoomed. He was unable to maintain his priestly dignity, having been, for so long a time, deprived of priestly faculties. For an entire year he had said no Mass. The Westphalians expressed doubt about his ordination: his own Rhineland friends defended him as best they could. Dissension was rife, as Father Meinkmann continued to hold divine services under Bishop Rosati's orders. The mischief had been done, and there was no way of reinstating the innocent, though rather imprudent priest, in the love and confidence of the people. In the quarrels between the hard-headed Westphalians and the light-hearted Rhinelanders, Father Meinkmann naturally took sides with the latter. This sealed his doom in Westphalia. Bishop Rosati appointed him to the new colony of Washington in Franklin County, and offered the mission of Westphalia to the Jesuit Fathers. Westphalia was to be the center of the Missions in Central Missouri. The Jesuits readily accepted the offer, April 23rd, 1838. For some weeks after his transfer, Father Meinkmann remained in Westphalia and Loose Creek. His new field of labor was a settlement of Hanoverians. The place had been visited by the Jesuit Father Christian Hoeken in 1835, but Father Meinkmann was its first resident priest. A small chapel of logs was built there soon after his arrival. On July

---

<sup>2</sup> Verhaegen to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

20, 1838, Father Meinkmann received the "Major Faculties" which included the power of dispensing in some matrimonial impediments, for Washington and Marthasville, now know under the name of Dut-zow, in Warren County on the north side of the Missouri River.<sup>3</sup>

The origin of Washington dates back to October 12th, 1833, when the first German Catholic emigrants from Belm and Osterkappeln, near Osnabrueck, arrived. There were twelve families, men, women and children, amounting to about sixty persons, that sailed from Bremen to New Orleans. The excessive heat of the Southland and the mosquito plague led them on to St. Louis. Illinois now became their objective and they engaged passage up the Illinois River. But on the very day they were to depart the boat sank. There was another large boat ready for departure, though not for the Illinois Country. Its pathway lay up the Missouri. Quickly deciding the question of their future home, the little colony started for Marthasville on the Missouri, of which newly founded town they had read a glowing account in Gottfried Duden's book.

The Captain of the boat, however, advised them to settle on the southern bank of the River, where a certain Mr. Owens would be very helpful to them. The advice seemed good to the weary pilgrims. At the landing place they found shelter for the night in the ware-house of a local trader. Mr. Owens offered them his smoke house for a temporary dwelling. A few frame-houses were speedily put together, and the nucleus of a town graced the river bank. During the winter the men of the new colony found employment with neighboring farmers. The early American settlers, invariable a hospitable people, received the German arrivals with great kindness. This, and the beauty of the American forest soon made the exiles feel at home in their new surroundings. Within a few months all had taken up a forty-acre claim and began farming on their own lands. Within two years all were well established and fairly prosperous. Letters went out to the folks at home; a second colony arrived and was placed in the neighborhood. All that was wanting, was a church and resident priest. The Jesuit missionaries came to the colony at longer or shorter intervals. In the meantime the good people kept alive the Faith by family-prayers and the service of their chanter and sacristan, Henry Niemann. But now they were promised a resident priest in the person of Father Henry Meinkmann, the founder of the Church of Westphalia, where Father Helias took possession in May 1838. Father Meinkmann remained at Westphalia with Father Helias until June 1838. Then he removed to

---

<sup>3</sup> Letters of Meinkmann to Rosati, in Msgr. Holweck's Article in "Pastoral-Blatt," Vol. 56, No. 5. Helias to Verhaegen and Verhaegen to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

Washington where the colonists had built a log-church. It was not before Father Busschots time that the new Congregation was named St. Francis Borgia.<sup>4</sup>

Father Meinkmann's career at Washington was not of long duration. Some indiscretions, innocent in their nature, but hurtful to his good name, were brought to the ears of his Bishop. He himself was ill with the usual fever of a new country; Bishop Rosati on his great confirmation trip in 1838 kept clear of the last station on his way, Washington, and hurried home. In his Diary the Bishop placed the following entry under date of October 17:

"Wednesday, about noon, we came to the town of Union. From this place I had intended to go to the town of Washington, and administer Confirmation in the church of St. Francis Regis. But it would have been very difficult on account of the river, to bring the children together and instruct them in one or two days, therefore we continued to journey in the public conveyance. In the Parish of St. Francis Regis there are about sixty Catholic families from Germany. Father Meinkmann is their pastor."<sup>5</sup> On November 25th 1839, the Bishop gave the Parish of Washington to the Jesuits and appointed the Belgian Father Busschotts to the place. Father Meinkmann received permission to return to Germany. But Germany was out of reach for lack of means: hence Father Meinkmann asked permission to build a chapel in Marthasville for the twenty-five Catholic families living in the neighborhood. The Superior of the Jesuits however, wrote to the Bishop stating, that he had no objection to the plan, but could not promise to take over the place if a church were built there, as the people were unable to support a resident priest.

Father Meinkmann's request was not granted, but within a short time he was sent by Vicar-General Verhaegen to the new German Parish on the western boundary of the State. "This is the Parish of Deepwater in Henry County, now called Germantown. The first settlement on Deepwater Creek was made in 1836, by the Walbert and Schmedding families, the advance guard of a large colony of Hanoverian Catholics. On their way they had stopped for a while with their countrymen already settled in Warren County, and there made the acquaintance of Father Meinkmann."<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> For information on Washington, cf. in "Amerika," St. Louis, April 29, 1923. G. Duden's book, mentioned above, was one of the most influential means of bringing German settlers to Missouri.

<sup>5</sup> Rosati's Diary.

<sup>6</sup> Holweek, l. c., p. 68. Garraghan, S. J., "The Mission of Central Missouri," in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. II, p. 158 s.

On his arrival at Deepwater in 1840 two log-houses were built, one to serve as a church and the other as pastoral residence. After two years the Congregation acquired another site and erected a better church thereon. This also was a log-structure, but had a frame spire fifty feet high. The land was donated by the Schmedding family. Father Meinkmann soon grew weary of the sylvan solitude in this far western settlement, and retired for a time to Europe; but finding himself out of place in the old world, he came back to the West. It was at Ferdinand, Indiana, that he spent the last five years of his life in pastoral work, dying August 25th, 1847.

"The project of a Jesuit residence in the interior of Missouri," notes Father Gilbert J. Garraghan, "had been under consideration for some time previous to the visit of Father Verhaegen to the Westphalia emigrants in the autumn of 1837. The eighteen or more Catholic stations scattered along both sides of the Missouri River as far as Boonville above Jefferson City were, during the period 1828-1838, visited four or five times a year by the Jesuits of St. Charles in missionary circuits averaging from four to six weeks' duration. But such arrangement was not by any means calculated to meet effectively the spiritual needs of the territory in question; it was, perforce, provisional only, pending the establishment of a centrally located headquarters for the missionaries. Already in 1836 the author of the Annual Letters of the Missouri Province pointed to the Catholic settlement of eighty souls on "St. Mary's Creek," the Westphalia settlement above referred to, as a likely place for a Jesuit residence. Partly, therefore, to supply the spiritual wants of the growing Catholic emigrant population of Osage and Gasconade Counties, and partly to secure a missionary center for the Fathers from which they could conveniently attend the various Catholic stations of Central Missouri, Father Verhaegen, with the consent of Bishop Rosati, decided to open a residence on Maries Creek. April 23rd, 1838, at a meeting of the Superior with his official advisers, it was determined that "Father Helias and Brother Morris be sent to the station generally known as Westphalia settlement near Jefferson City."

Father Mary Ferdinand Benedict Ghislain Helias de Huddeghem, to give the apostle of Central Missouri his full designation, was born on the 3rd of August 1795, at Ghent in Flanders. The family was of the old Flemish nobility and staunchly Catholic. The boy Ferdinand attended the College at Roulers and then the College Montrouge, in France. When Fathers Nerinckx, in November 1815, came to Ghent,

---

<sup>7</sup> Biographical notices by Father Helias in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese. Holweek, "Ferdinand de Huddghen," in "Pastoral-Blatt," Vol. 53, No. 3.

the young enthusiast resolved to accompany him to the American Mission. But the elder Helias refused permission. When the Society of Jesus was reestablished in 1814, young Helias joined them as a student and on October 7th, 1817, as a member. Ferdinand again requested to be sent to America, and once more met a refusal. Having been sent to Brieg in Switzerland for the purpose of pursuing his theological studies he spent twelve years of his life amid the glorious mountain scenery. It was here that Ferdinand Helias learnt to speak and write German. In Pentecost week, 1824, he received the orders of deaconship and priesthood and celebrated his first mass on Corpus Christi day. In February 1826, he accompanied the Provincial P. Drach to Rome and was received by Pope Leo XII in private audience. In 1831 Father Helias became Professor of German Language and Literature at the Jesuit College at Freiburg in Switzerland. Early in January 1833 came the fulfilment of the young priest's dearest wish, his call to America. His companions of the voyage were Fathers McSherry and Bussechotts.

On St. Ferdinand's day, May 30, Father Helias said his first mass on the soil of America. Georgetown in Maryland was his first field of activity and school for learning English. Then the German missions near Conewago, Pennsylvania, were entrusted to his care. Gettysburg, Mount St. Ignace, Petersburg and Conewago, each had a Sunday's visit once a month. At last in the summer of 1835, came the long desired call to the wilds of Missouri. Life among the Indians was Father Helias' ideal, but it was to be a blessed life among the German Catholics of Central Missouri.

When Father Helias arrived at St. Louis, August 25th, 1835, he met Father Joseph Anthony Lutz, his fellow-novice at Brieg in Switzerland. From him he learnt what great need there was of priests that spoke German. There was the chapel of St. Aloysius at the University, in which the German Catholics of the North-side were wont to meet for divine service. Father Helias gave himself entirely to the care for their spiritual wants until April 1838, when he was sent by his Superior to the newly established residence at Westphalia, and, as the *House-Chronicle* says, "courageously accepted the task imposed upon him, an arduous one, withall, as there are heart burnings and discussions to be healed, before any good can be accomplished among the people."<sup>8</sup>

Father Helias made the journey up the Missouri in company of Father De Smet S. J., the renowned Indian missionary, and the Jesuit Fathers Verhaegen and Eysvogels. But, as the boat proceeded so very slowly and met so many mishaps, Father Helias, had himself and his pony put ashore, and thus proceeded by land to his destination. On

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Lebroqui's *French Life of Father Helias*, published in Ghent, 1878.

May 11th, he arrived at the Creole-settlement Cote-Sans-Dessein, opposite the mouth of the Osage River. The village was much reduced in extent since the visit of Father De La Croix. The church, dedicated to St. Joseph had been swept away by the turbid waves of the Missouri. Only the cemetery remained. Father Helias said his thanksgiving Mass in a private residence, and then crossed the river to what is now a part of the parish of Loose Creek, and there said his first mass within the circle of his eighteen missionary stations. On Sunday, May 13th, he took formal possession of the church of St. John in Westphalia Settlement. A plot of ground, forty acres, was obtained from Francis Geisberger, and laid out in town-lots, with the church lot in the center. On July 27th, Father Buschotts brought along from Conewago a number of artisans. Church, school and residence being built, Father Helias and Buschotts began their missionary labors from the new center, Father Buschotts attending to the home-duties, and Father Helias making his towns on horseback. Regular services were held at Westphalia, where the people were Low-Germans, at Loose Creek, the home of the Rhinelanders, at Rich Fountain, the bulk of whose parishioners were Bavarians, and at Taos which was mainly settled by Hanoverians and Belgians. When in October 1838 Bishop Rosati came to Westphalia, he conferred the old title of Cote-Sans-Dessein church, on the new church near that vanishing town, and called it St. Joseph's. Confirmation was administered to thirty-eight members of the parish. The Bishop preached in English. Father Buschotts, who acted as pastor and school teacher in Westphalia, was transferred to Washington, Franklin County, on September 23rd, 1839, as successor to Father Meinkmann. Thus Father Helias was left alone in his wide missionary field, until the arrival of Father James Cotting in 1846.

During Father Buschotts stay in Westphalia Father Helias succeeded in making one or more visits to all the stations in his little Kingdom of eleven counties on both sides of the Missouri River. In a manuscript account compiled by him in 1839, the tireless missionary gives a census of the Catholic families he found on these journeys. On the south side of the Missouri there were at Westphalia: Bernard Bruns, Doctor of Medicine; Geisberg, Brockmann, Ottens, Gramatica, Walters, Schmitz, Otto, Debeis, Eppenhoff, Oldenlehre, Huber, Nacke, Bartmann, Eck, Knueve, Zellerhoff, Juchmann, Bose, Eckmeier, Kolks, Vennewald, Lueckenhoff, Meierpeter, Schuelen, Krekel, Dohmen, Stiefemaun, Hagenbrock, Boessen, Linnemann, Goetzen, Artzt, Brockerhoff, Kern, Wilhaupt, Schwartz, Hasslag, Holtermann, Sudhoff, Borgmann, Kuess.

Jefferson City: J. Schater, Kolkmeier, Richters, Hart, Withnell, Hannen, Buz, Kramer, Tellmann, Monaghan, Ryan, Gilmar, Corker, Bauerdick, Brand, Doherty.

Loose Creek: Monnier, Valentin, Cordonier, Brichaud, Besson, Saulnier, Stoffen, Farrell, Reed, Burbus.

French Village: Peter Goujon, Louis Goujon, Angelica Mercer, widow; Gleizeur, Picqueur, Vincennes, Denoyer, Luison, Leblanc.

And on the north side of the Missouri River, Cote-Sans-Dessein: Roye, Faye, Arnould, Nicholas, Renaud.

Bailey's Creek: Logsdon, Simon Welch, Howard, Folgs, Serpentin, Miller, Heth.

Portland: Priestly Gill.

Hancock Prairie: Joseph Shannon, Thomas Flood, Anna Catharina, widow of John Preis.

Columbia: Lynch and Kitt.

Booneville: Fuchs, Weber, Fis, Pecht, Fay, Morey, Dr. Heart, Rockwie, Briel.

New Franklin: Matthias Simon.

The transfer of Father Busschotts to Washington had relieved Father Helias of the immediate care of the stations in St. Louis, Franklin, Gasconade and Warren Counties, namely Manchester, Washington, Burbus, Harry Reeds Settlement, Bailey's Creek, Cadet Creek and Marthasville.<sup>9</sup>

In his account of 1838 Father Helias mentions a station "across the Osage at Herman Nieters, Liberty Township" as having twenty Catholic families. This place was afterwards named Taos. Here Father Helias built his second church in Central Missouri, that of St. Francis Xavier (1840). On May 24th, the Feast of the Ascension, he officiated at French Village, and the day after at Cote-Sans-Dessein. Saturday he was at Hibernia, about five miles northeast of Jefferson City. On Sunday May 27th, he celebrated mass for the first time in Jefferson City.

"Nowhere was he given a heartier welcome than in Jefferson City," writes Father Garraghan, "The Catholic population of the town consisted of about one hundred and fifty souls, chiefly German and Irish emigrants, most of whom were employed as laborers on the new Capitol building then in process of construction. Father Helias spent a few days among these good people and afterwards revisited them regularly once a month. Before the close of 1838, sixteen hundred dollars had been collected among the Catholics for a church and school to be placed under the invocation of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Mr. John Withnell, architect of the Capitol, and personally known to Father Helias, offered

---

<sup>9</sup> MS., "Notices and Letters of Father Helias," in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese. For Census, cf. "Missouri Historical Review," vol. V, p. 85, 1915. The article was written by Father Joseph H. Schmidt.

his professional services for the new edifice at a nominal charge. The Irish and German workmen employed on the Capitol also volunteered their help. The only difficulty that beset the venture was the lack of a suitable site."<sup>10</sup>

At last, after one or two favorable prospects ended in disappointment, a proper site was purchased, and a frame structure was erected under the invocation of St. Ignatius Loyola and dedicated on Easter Sunday 1843.

During this tedious interval divine service was held "in the large hall of the German Boarding House of Mr. Henry Haar."

Bishop Rosati, assisted by Father Verhaegen, administered Confirmation in Jefferson City on October 1838. "I gave confirmation in the Hall of an Hotel in Jefferson City to 11 persons on a week day: there are two hundred Catholics, not yet a church, but we have begun to make arrangements to have a decent one in stone. Mr. Withnell, who is building there the Capitol, very kindly received us in his house: he will be of great service in the building of the church."<sup>11</sup>

Jefferson City is not only the Capital of the State of Missouri, but also the home of the State Penitentiary. Father Helias was the first priest to say Mass before the convicts.

Father Garraghan quotes from the Annual Letters a brief account of the happy death of one of Father Helias' convict converts:

"A young Englishman, Henry Lane by name, of aristocratic connections and a one-time college student, at least so report had it, was under sentence of death. His desperate antecedents promised small hope of any spiritual impression being made upon him. Father Helias, however, undertook to prepare him for death with the result that the young man underwent a complete change of heart and went to his fate with the most edifying sentiments of faith and repentance. The crowd who gathered to witness the execution looked for a desperate struggle from the criminal when brought to the gallows. To their surprise, nothing of the kind occurred. On the contrary, he walked to the scaffold without handcuffs and with a crucifix in his hand, and the words of warning which he addressed to the spectators on the vice of drunkenness brought tears to the eyes of many. The breaking at the last moment of the hangman's rope when it was already around the neck of the condemned man, failed to unnerve him. He persevered to the end in his pious sentiments, the sacred names of Jesus and Mary rising to his lips in the brief spell of agony that preceded death."<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Garraghan, "The Mission of Central Missouri," "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. II, pp. 164.

<sup>11</sup> Rosati to Timon, October 20, 1838, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>12</sup> *Litterae Annuae*, 1840, apud Garraghan, I. c.

Father Helias in his notes complains of the spirit of indifference obtaining among the French Creoles of Cote-Sans-Dessein and French Village, but the strong faith and spirit of sacrifice among the other members of his fold is constantly on his lips. Of course, the pathway of life was not always smooth and pleasant among these sturdy immigrants from various parts of the Fatherland. There were bickerings and misunderstandings and cross currents of endeavor. At Taos Father Helias had secured ten acres of land for the church, in a central location for the German farmers and began to lay plans for the erection of a temporary structure. A small party of parishioners, however, pressed a demand that another site, nearer to their habitations should be bought from the Government. The place chosen by Father Helias lay within easy reach of his two most important stations, Westphalia and Jefferson City. The advocates of the new site were intent upon their own convenience, and carried the case to Father Verhaegen the Administrator of the Diocese during Bishop Rosati's absence. Father Helias carried his point and built the church where he thought it would serve best the purpose he had in view. Soon a village grew up around the church of St. Francis Xavier. For a time it was known as Haarville, but as the Post Office of the place was named Taos, the village also assumed the Spanish designation of Taos. Father Helias thus described the place in his Memoirs; "There are no bilious fevers here as elsewhere, the parish buildings are more pretentious than in the other residences established by this missionary; in a word, the place makes a much better appearance. Moreover, the settlers succeed better here owing to the nearness of the State capital and of the railroad, by which they are enabled to ship their produce to all points in the state. The land has all been taken up and old farms sell at a high price, while the soil is less broken up and much more productive than on the other side of the Osage River."<sup>13</sup>

The great parish of the Bavarians with the picturesque name of Rich Fountain, dedicated to the Sacred Heart, was organized in 1840, but received a mighty increase about 1842, when "two hundred and fifty families," as Father Helias states, "arrived from Bavaria to escape the unjust laws, which Bavarian Liberalism had foisted on the people of that Catholic country. Many marriages of these newcomers, clandestinely contracted, had to be validated by Father Helias. In the course of time the Parish of the Sacred Heart became "a model for all others," in piety and regularity of life.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Garraghan, l. c., p. 165.

<sup>14</sup> Helias Memoirs, p. 54.

The year 1841 brought two great afflictions to the Catholic congregation under Father Helias' care; an epidemic spread over the entire region and garnered in numerous victims: a severe drought lasting for months, ruined the crops, and brought the people to the brink of starvation. Day after day Father Helias was in the saddle riding up and down the country side, to comfort the dying, and to help the forsaken.<sup>15</sup> The Good Shepherd's kindly efforts were, no doubt, heartily appreciated by his widely scattered flock. Yet, there were wolves in sheep-clothing, intent upon scattering the sheep by attacking the shepherd. The chronicles of those early days often dwell upon the doings of the so-called "Latin farmers," men more obsessed by the pride of education, than possessed of education itself. Some of them were infected with the revolutionary spirit, that spurned all control. In general, they formed "a class of cultivated men, yet frequently impractical, for whom manual labor proved a hard school of experience."<sup>16</sup>

Westphalia seems to have harbored a number of such "Latin farmers," whose impractical methods, having led to failure in their private concerns, were to be extended to public concerns as well. Their efforts were not unavailing, in sowing dissension between pastor and people. Some of Father Helias' most devoted parishioners were won over to the side of the malcontents. What the trouble was about we have no means of telling, yet the rancor in the hearts of so many of his people against him, who had done nothing but good to them, bore heavily on his gentle heart. The future seemed clouded with portents of coming ruin. He declared that the only hope of saving the Faith in Central Missouri lay in the two parishes of the Sacred Heart at Rich Fountain, and of St. Francis Xavier in Cole County. The trouble culminated in Father Helias giving up his post at Westphalia and retiring to St. Louis, after affixing to the church door a Latin distich of his own composition:

Ardua qui quaerit, rubros cur currit ad Indos;  
Westphalam veniat, ardua cuncta dabunt.<sup>17</sup>

Father Helias's fears were not realized in the manner and extent he entertained. The people of Westphalia were too staunchly Catholic at heart to tolerate a schism. The loss of their pastor and the Latin inscription affixed to the Church-door may have penetrated the armor of pride of the "Latin farmers." and moved the people, hard-

<sup>15</sup> Barnes' "Commonwealth of Missouri."

<sup>16</sup> Faust, "The German Element in the United States," vol. I, p. 442.

<sup>17</sup> "Why should the man who covets hardships hie to the dusky Indies? Let him come to Westphalia and he will find hardships aplenty."

headed and stubborn as they were by nature, to better thoughts. But a severe visitation seemingly was needed to bridge over the chasm.

“Meanwhile,” says Father Helias’ narrative, “the church of St. Joseph stands deserted and closed against the wolves, a reproach to those who, though of the number of the sheep, have by contentions, subtlety of speech, and ambition for things beyond them, forced the pastor to retire, reluctantly withal and for only a brief spell—but Westphalia had ceased forever to be a residence.” And after these words follows the colophon, “Here ends the sad history of the colony of Westphalia, founded by me. May 11th, 1842.”<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> “*Historia Westphaliae*,” p. 27.

## FATHER JOHN TIMON, VISITOR OF THE LAZARISTS

One of the most beautiful friendships recorded in our early Annals was that of the two Lazarist Fathers John Mary Odin and John Timon. Entering the Seminary of St. Mary's of the Barrens at nearly the same time, Odin as deacon, Timon as theology student, Odin became the younger man's professor in Sacred science. Later on, both were sent on a missionary tour to New Madrid and Arkansas Post, Odin as priest and Timon as sub-deacon. Frequent excursions were made by Odin and Timon, now also raised to the priesthood since 1825, sometimes far to the south, but they were generally in a wide circle around the Seminary. Their names are inscribed in the Baptismal Records of Kaskaskia, English Settlement and O'Hara's in Illinois, as well as of Cape Girardeau, Jackson, St. Michael, Potosi and Old Mines in Missouri. Their activities extended over a territory of two hundred and fifty miles. When Father Odin became acting Superior at the Barrens, Father Timon was his chief and often sole support. During the trying years of Father Tornatore's administration at the Barrens, Father Timon was employed in various missions of utmost importance, as the restoration of peace and good order in the Community, and the acquisition of the Cape Girardeau property.

In September 1833, Father Odin started on a voyage to France, his native country, whilst Father Timon was kept busy with his manifold duties in the Seminary, and the College, as well as in the missionary field around the Barrens.

Father John B. Tornatore, the Superior, was a learned theologian and most exemplary priest, but he labored under two great disadvantages: his inability to learn English, and his lack of administrative ability. A general assembly of the Congregation of the Mission was held at Paris, at which Father Odin assisted. The complaints from America were ventilated, and it was decreed that the American Mission be raised to the status of a Province, and that Father Odin's dearest friend, Father John Timon, should be made Visitor. On the 16th, day of November 1835, the decrees arrived at the Barrens, causing mingled feelings of joy and consternation in the hearts of the two men; for the letter contained the additional decrees, that the College should be suppressed, that one of the priests should be expelled, and that the Bishop should pay six hundred francs annually for each seminarian. The income from the College had been the chief financial resource of the community; its suppression meant the destruction of

the Seminary also. And Bishop Rosati, as they all knew, would not consent to pay such a large sum for his Seminarians, as the new decree demanded.

Father Timon, at first, humbly yet firmly, refused to accept the office of Visitor under such impossible conditions; and at last, requested Father Tornatore to keep the secret until a meeting of the priests of the Mission could be convened. Father Tornatore assembled the community and informed them of the change. All were satisfied; only Father Timon persisted in his refusal of the position. He visited his old friends Dahmen and Borgna at Ste. Genevieve, Father Bouillier at old Mines. They too agreed that he must accept the appointment, and Father John Timon bowed in humble submission to the will of his superiors. The new Visitor certainly had sufficient cause, beside his lowly estimate of his abilities, to refuse the high and difficult office. The Congregation owed about 60,000 francs, and had but few and rather uncertain resources. A number of the priests of the mission had gone to New Orleans. Many of the College students were in arrears with their payments, some of them hopelessly so. No wonder that Father Timon hesitated to accept what was literally a burden. Yet, after accepting it, he never looked back with regret, but set to work resolutely to retrieve the Seminary's former rigor and glory.

John Timon was the man fitted for the great work of renewing the spirit of the Congregation. He had met poignant sorrow and disastrous failure in his early manhood, whilst earnestly striving after the things of the world: but every loss and every failure had proved to be a stepping stone to higher things, the things of the spirit. And here he now stood on an elevation he had never dreamt of, and here too failure was staring him in the face; but his humble, childlike spirit said within him: The outcome is God's, to do His will is my duty, and to do it as well as I can, shall be my constant endeavor.<sup>1</sup>

The Visitor's first move was to convoke a meeting of his priests. Their request was that he suspend all action in regard to the College, until the Superior General could be informed of the moral impossibility of its suppression. Father Odin, who had returned from France, joined in the protest. But first of all, the cloud of discontent that had settled on the fair field intrusted to his care, must be dissipated. Gently, yet firmly, as was his wont, Visitor Timon restored order in the Community at home, and brought back the priests that had gone to New Orleans. The Superior General rescinded the obnoxious order

---

<sup>1</sup> For the facts here stated cf. "Timon's Correspondence with Bishop Rosati" as gathered by Dr. Souvay of Kenrick Seminary. The Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese contain a number of letters and reports in the handwriting of Timon. Of printed sources found useful: Deuther, Charles G., "The Life and Times of Rt. Rev. John Timon, D. D.," Washington, D. C., 1870.

of suppression of the College. The Visitor's excellent business sense found ways of reducing the indebtedness. Early in April 1836, the two old friends, Timon and Odin, traveled to Cape Girardeau to establish the new Lazarist Home; Timon as Visitor had the honor and pleasure to introduce his friend to the people of St. Vincent's Parish as their Pastor. Returning from Cape Girardeau to the Barrens, the Visitor, on Sunday April 17th, preached to the people exhorting them to contribute liberally toward the work of completing their own beautiful church.

Although Father Timon had a truly filial love and veneration for Bishop Rosati, his duty as Visitor of the Lazarist Province led him, at times, into rather lively controversies with him. As members of a religious community, the Fathers should lead a community life: yet a number of them lived apart as parish-priests. It was the policy of the Congregation to withdraw its priests from isolated stations and to bring them together in missionary centers from which they were to visit the surrounding stations. Thus the withdrawal of Father Doutreligne from Cahokia by order of the Visitor, was a case in point, and the establishment of the La Salle Missions with its community of three priests gave an exemplification of what was desired by the Congregation of the Mission. But the ideal could not be carried out in all the Lazarist parishes, without disorder and real harm to the people. The number of secular priests was too small to supply all the stations that would become vacant if the policy of the Congregation were carried out without regard to the necessities of the diocese. In a letter of May 11th, 1836, the Bishop reminds the Visitor, that the Superior of the Congregation of the Mission may make choice of the pastors of parishes belonging to the Congregation of the Mission, but he must apprise the Bishop of it and propose his choice to him for approval. "This being well understood and exactly observed, there will be no occasion for any misunderstanding,"<sup>2</sup> concludes the letter. The Visitor acquiesced, but in the sequel found himself obliged to refuse to accept some of the parishes and missions the Bishop requested him to supply.

In the Fall of 1837 Visitor Timon sailed for France, reaching the Motherhouse of his Congregation in Paris on the 16th of September. Father Aladel, the Superior General, received him with every mark of respect and affection, and presented him with the generous sum of 10,000 francs for the use of the American Province.<sup>3</sup> Accompanied by a number of new missionaries, the Visitor set sail for New Orleans on October 15th, and after a stormy voyage of ten weeks landed there late in the month of December. The year 1837 witnessed one of the severest financial

---

<sup>2</sup> Letter Book of Rosati.

<sup>3</sup> Rosati's Diary.

crises of our history. Father Timon displayed his usual excellent business sense, in so placing various large sums of money entrusted to his care by European friends that no loss was sustained by anyone concerned. The most precious fruit of Father Timon's visit to the Mother-house was the new band of disciples of Christ secured for the American Mission. From France, Italy and Spain they came, a Domenec, Amat, Cercos, Estany, Burlando, Giustinani, Parodi and others.

The College prospered, the missions took a fresh impulse, converts were becoming more numerous. On December 12th, 1838, the Visitor with Fathers Armangol, Bouillier, Tiernan, Giustiniani and two lay-brothers met Bishop Blanc of New Orleans at the Church of the Assumption, and began the new Seminary: Father Bouillier was established as the Superior of the Church of the Ascension at Donaldsonville.

Towards the end of 1838, the Visitor Timon was sent to examine into the condition of religion in the newly founded republic of Texas. His report was forwarded to Rome by Bishop Blanc, and was to bear fruit in due time. During all these distracting labors the Visitor made use of every opportunity to promote the spiritual welfare of the people he met, by giving missions, hearing confessions, and instructing converts.

It was in 1842 that the Seminary was removed from the Barrens to St. Louis. The conclusion of the First Diocesan Synod of St. Louis was to be marked with the laying of the corner-stone of the proposed Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Soulard's Addition on the southern boundary of the city. In fact, the printed report of the Synod states that this ceremony had been held with all the members of the Synod in attendance on the Bishop.<sup>4</sup> But Bishop Rosati's Diary states that, owing to a severe rain-storm, the corner-stone laying had to be postponed to the following Sunday, May 5th. Although most of the priests, had returned to their respective stations, the ceremony was performed according to the prescriptions of the Roman Pontifical. Father John Timon preached a sermon in English. The parchment placed in the cavity of the stone contains the information that the lot on which the church was to be erected was generously donated by the pious matron Julia C. Soulard, and that the diocesan Seminary was to be built on the adjoining lot. The inscription concludes with the significant words of Sacred Scripture: *Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam. Pr. 126.* The church of the Most Holy Trinity was never completed: the materials were used in the erection of the Seminary. Lack of funds was the main cause of this failure.

Services were held at Holy Trinity Chapel, of which Father Francis X. Dahmen C.M. had charge. The Seminary found a temporary home in the Old Soulard Mansion. The Visitor, who was also Vicar-General

---

<sup>4</sup> The First Synod of St. Louis.

of the diocese resided here as Superior: the staff of professors consisted of Fathers C. Amat and James Tiernan. In 1842 there were only six theological students in attendance at the Seminary. Under the direction of the *Clercs du Saint Viateur*, whom Father Timon had brought from Paris, a Preparatory Seminary for the education of boys, who intended to embrace the ecclesiastical state, was established in Carondelet. From this Little Seminary the Theological Seminary was to draw its recruits. The charges for board and tuition were fixed at \$100.

St. Mary's College at the Barrens, in 1840, was under the presidency of Rev. Joseph Paquin, assisted by the Lazarists Hector Figari, John B. Robert, John B. Tornatore, Michael Domenech, Mariano Maller, M. Cercos and Stehle.

A man of such untiring zeal, patient prudence and practical idealism, could not fail to draw the attention of the Roman authorities, as well as of the American Bishops, upon him as a fit subject for episcopal honors.

Bishop Rosati, amid his manifold labors and cares, sought to have the Visitor as his coadjutor, and on September 7th, received a papal bull appointing John Timon as Bishop of Venesi, and Coadjutor to the Bishop of St. Louis.<sup>5</sup> But the humble Lazarist refused to accept the appointment and would not be moved to reconsider his refusal. Bishop Rosati's fondest hopes were blasted. "You know, I need a coadjutor," he wrote from Kaskaskia to Bishop Blanc under date of May 16th, 1839, "My needs surpass my strength. I cannot finish one thing, before I am compelled to commence something new. I must be my own secretary, my Vicar-General, my Council, for they that are named for these positions, are prevented by circumstances to fulfil the duties connected with them. For several months I have not known a moment's rest. I rise at 4 o'clock, and at the end of the day, I am obliged to put off some of my unfinished work to the next day. This cannot last much longer."<sup>6</sup> Owing to a haunting fear that he might possibly come too near of having a mitre placed on his head unawares, the Visitor declined to assume the duties of administrator of the diocese, during the Bishop's absence. In consequence the Jesuit Father Verhaegen was made administrator.

On April 12th, 1840, Father Timon was appointed Prefect Apostolic of Texas. He accepted at once and appointed his early friend and companion, Father John Mary Odin sub-Prefect, and sent him with full powers to administer the Church in that great state. Father Doutreluigne was given him as companion: Of the missionary labors of the two faithful friends in Texas, we cannot here give an account, as lying outside of our province. As for Father Odin, the course of

<sup>5</sup> Rosati's Diary.

<sup>6</sup> Rosati to Blanc, Letter Book of Bishop Rosati, May 16, 1839.

events brought him the refusal of a mitre, that might have been to him a martyr's crown—that of Detroit. He refused the appointment to Detroit, but accepted that of Vicar Apostolic of Texas, and later on, that of Archbishop of New Orleans in succession to Bishop Anthony Blanc.

Father Timon, now freed from engrossing cares of the Prefecture Apostolic of Texas, continued a life of incessant activity as Superior of the Lazarists in America for six more years, until on the 5th day of September 1847, he received the appointment as first Bishop of the See of Buffalo, New York. His humility prompted him to decline the honor, but his friends urged him to accept, and he yielded because his duty, as Visitor had become extremely onerous. He was consecrated on October 17, in the Cathedral of New York and at once proceeded to his diocese. Here he met strenuous opposition from the trustees of the Cathedral, but surmounted all difficulties, and spent the last twenty years of his life in building up his diocese, highly regarded by the hierarchy and more than once desired as coadjutor in more important dioceses. Bishop Timon died at Buffalo on April 16 1867.<sup>7</sup>

"Never shall I forget," wrote the late distinguished Jesuit, Father Smarius, "the days of the missions for the laity and of the retreats for the clergy, which I had the pleasure to conduct in the Cathedral at Buffalo during the three or four years previous to Bishop Timon's holy demise. The first to rise in the morning and to ring the bell for meditation and for prayer, he would totter from door to door along the corridors of the episcopal residence, with a lighted candle in his hand, to see whether all had responded to the call of the bell and betaken themselves to the spot marked out for the performance of that sacred and wholesome duty . . . And then, the more than fatherly heart, that forgiving kindness to repentant sinners, even to such as had again and again deservedly incurred his displeasure and the penalties of ecclesiastical censures or excommunications. 'Father,' he would say, 'I leave this case in your hands. I give you all power, only save his soul.' And then, that simple, child-like humility, which seemed wounded by even the performance of acts which the excellence and dignity of the episcopacy naturally force from its subjects and inferiors. How often have I seen him fall on his aged knees, face to face with one or other of my clerical brethren, who had fallen on theirs to receive his saintly blessing."

---

<sup>7</sup> Deuther, *op. cit.*, *passim*. Like St. Paul, Bishop Timon was a man of small stature, a little over five feet high; he was of a combative disposition but held his temper in strict obedience.

## CHAPTER 31

### THE LA SALLE MISSION

The story of the La Salle Mission begins with the visit of Father James Marquette to the village of the Peorias, a branch of the great nation of the Illinois in 1673, on his return from the voyage of exploration down the Mississippi River.<sup>1</sup> Here the first baptism was administered in the country of the Illinois. To this place the sainted missionary tried hard to come again after the winter of 1673-1674. But he was prevented, attacked by disease and detained at a place within the present site of Chicago. His faithful Indians ministered to him and prayed with him for his recovery; and in Holy Week, 1675 Father Marquette was once more with his beloved Illinois at the original village of the Kaskaskia. The new mission was placed under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception. It was situated on the Illinois River at the foot of Starved Rock, upon which La Salle later on directed Tonti to build Fort St. Louis. This place remained an Indian Mission long after the Kaskaskia Indians had migrated southward to their new home between the Mississippi and Kaskaskia Rivers, where the Kaskaskia Mission was to attain such wide celebrity. Fort Creve Coeur, or Broken Heart, was built on the east side of the Illinois River, a short distance below the outlet of Peoria Lake. Here the Franciscan Fathers, and later on the Jesuit Fathers labored most faithfully for the conversion of the Indians of forest and prairie until the suppression of the Society of Jesus in all French possessions in 1763 brought disaster to all the western missions. The Black Hawk War in 1832 finally drove out the remnants of the once powerful tribes and opened the country to the settlement by whites. This was six years before the arrival of the missionary Fathers of St. Vincent de Paul, Fathers John Blasius Raho and Aloysius John Mary Parodi. The outward circumstance that led to the early settlement of northeastern Illinois was the construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, connecting the Great Lakes with the river system of the Mississippi Valley. The Illinois River was navigable from Ottawa in La Salle County to its mouth. In Indian times the headwaters of the Illinois River, flowing southeast, and of the Chicago River emptying in Lake Michigan, were connected by a portage, a trail over which the canoes were carried. By connecting the two rivers and deepening and widening the channel, a canal would be obtained the value of which seemed immeasurable. The work began

---

<sup>1</sup> Shea, J. G., "Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi," Marquette's Narrative.

simultaneously at Chicago and at La Salle on the Fourth of July, 1836. The construction of the canal brought thousands of hardy, industrious men into the country, about three-fourths of whom were Irish Catholics. The chief stations comprised in the general designation of the La Salle Mission were La Salle, Ottawa, Dayton and Marseilles in La Salle County; Lacon in Putnam County; Virginia in Cass County; Peoria and Kickapoo in Peoria County, Pekin in Tazewell, Pleasant Grove and Black Partridge, eleven stations for two priests, who were to reside at La Salle.

The entire district lay within the jurisdiction of Bishop Rosati of St. Louis. Occasional excursions to one or the other place had, indeed, been made by the Jesuit Father Van Quickenborne, and Fathers Le-fevere, St. Cyr and George Hamilton. But the real planting of these missions was the work of the Lazarists Raho and Parodi. John Blase Raho, was a native of the Kingdom of Naples, where he entered the Congregation of the Mission, and was ordained. He was sent to the American Mission by Father Odin, and arrived at the Barrens on the 16th day of November 1834. Soon after his arrival Father Raho became pastor of the congregation at the Barrens. Father Raho's faithful companion, Aloysius John Mary Parodi, was a native of Genoa, as we learn from a letter of Father Timon, and born in 1811. He joined the Lazarists in America, December 5, 1835, was ordained priest by Bishop Rosati in the new church of the Barrens on November 1, 1837. Going to La Salle in 1838 he remained there until 1846.<sup>2</sup>

It was about Christmas time 1837, that one of the contractors on the Illinois Canal, William Byrne, appeared before Bishop Rosati at St. Louis and asked for missionaries for the hundreds of Irish Catholics dispersed in northeastern Illinois, especially in the various camps along the canal. The Bishop gave assurance that missionaries would be sent at once. The Congregation of the Mission, of which Father John Timon, C.M., himself an Irishman, was then Visitor, was to furnish the men. La Salle village was to be the center of the mission, and the Pastor of the Barrens was selected to carry out the work and received Father Parosi as his assistant.<sup>3</sup>

On Thursday, March 22, 1838, they started on their journey of 400 miles, from St. Mary's Landing on the Mississippi to La Salle on the Illinois. Remaining over Sunday at St. Louis, to say Mass and pay their respects to Bishop Rosati, the messengers of the Gospel touched at Peoria, and arrived at Peru, midnight, March 29. Accompanied by a large procession of the inhabitants of Peru and La Salle they crossed the bridge that separates the two places, amid the glar-

---

<sup>2</sup> Archives of the St. Louis Archdiocese, and the Kenrick Seminary.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Shaw, Thomas M., "Story of the LaSalle Mission," 2 vols., Chicago. From this we have taken most of the statements of fact and excerpts from letters.

ing light of five hundred torches, and the music of fifes and drums. "Garry-Owen" was the tune to which the procession marched along; on arrival at the Byrne mansion in La Salle an address of welcome was delivered by the little daughter of Mr. Byrne; then the crowd gave a hearty cheer to the missionaries, and deep silence again enveloped the little town.

But bright and early in the morning the Catholic people came to assist at the first Mass to be offered up in La Salle. In the largest room of the house a temporary altar stood prepared, at which Father Raho first, and then Father Parodi celebrated Mass. The room was crowded. Passion Sunday was announced as the day of the public inauguration of the La Salle mission. Hearty and generous as the reception of the Fathers was, the outlook must have seemed bleak and hopeless. The country round about for miles and miles was still in its austere beauty and loneliness. Then, as Father Shaw says, "the consideration of the vastness of the field to cultivate would thicken the gloom and depress the spirit." "Within its boundaries were the counties of La Salle, Lee, Bureau, Grundy, Henry, Knox, Stark, Putnam, Marshall, Peoria, Tazewell, McLean, Sangamon, Macoupin, Cass, nearly one-third of the area of the great State of Illinois. Over that extensive area were scattered a multitude of sheep that had no shepherd," except themselves. And their resources were to be found in themselves and in the spirit of generosity they would cultivate among their long forsaken people. But God was their Comfort and Help in all difficulties and perplexities.

Father Timon's choice of Raho and Parodi proved a most excellent one. For five months, from March to August, the good Fathers made their home with Mr. Byrne, in a room which served as bedroom, sitting-room, study-room, recreation hall and chapel on week-days, and on Sundays also, until the largest room in the boarding-house of John Hynes could be secured for the House of God among His people. On Passion Sunday Father Parodi sang High Mass, and Father Raho preached the sermon. The preacher announced among other points: "On week days we offer the Holy Mass in our common room (in the house of Mr. Byrne); on Sundays in fine weather, in the forest, and in bad weather in the house of John Hynes." After services thirty children received baptism at the hand of the Superior of the Mission.

On Maundy Thursday there were sixty communicants, on Easter morn there were one hundred and forty.

But the good Lord was not always to make His home in a borrowed room amid such poor surroundings. A real church, a true house of God was to be built from the offerings of the Faithful. Up and down the Canal Father Raho, therefore, went stopping at the camps, the boarding houses, and at the shanties along his way, and he everywhere found willing hands and generous hearts; but also many a sad disappointment.

Father Raho himself gives up a glimpse of his experiences. Writing to the "Annals of the Propagation of the Faith," he says:

"Seeing we could not continue without a church, day and night I was wrapped up in thought. At first everything seemed to smile upon the enterprise. A Protestant gave his word for an acre of ground and for \$500.00. Other Protestants, desirous to rival our Catholics in zeal, showed themselves very generous in contributions. The number of brick necessary for the church, had been ordered; and as I was about to commence the buildings, news came that the ground given did not belong to the giver (Bangs), and that this fellow, far from being prepared to send me the promised sum, \$500.00, had fled the country, carrying away \$9000.00, the hard earnings of the poor canallers he had employed; and therefore, the contributions promised by these good people."<sup>4</sup>

Bowed down by this stroke of adversity, but more on account of the losses of his people, than his own, Father Raho did not give up to despondency, but renewed his determination to build a church, if not of brick, then of wood. As Father Shaw says:

"Experience in the old log seminary of St. Mary's, the Mother House at the Barrens, and in the cabin of their host had taught the missionaries that few constructions, when properly laid down and put together for solidity, ease and charms of home, could surpass a log building. Was the cost of erecting a log church taken into consideration? It would not be heavy. The material in timber was on the bottom and uplands; groves of elm, white and black oak. The labor of felling, hauling and hewing would be largely and generously given; thatching and plastering would only be an item; and at comparatively small cost, the structure to God and souls would rise."<sup>5</sup>

The plan for a log church was decided upon.

"The contract of building the church," continues Father Shaw, "was let out to Mr. Madden, the chief carpenter in the mission, not without pretensions to a style of architecture quite original. The material for building was to be of log, roof straw, flooring of oak, and the interior heavily plastered. The length was to be fifty feet, width thirty, and height fourteen. The home of the missionaries would go up at the completion; built of the same material; one story high, containing a room, serving at the same time for private devotions, and for a sacristy—a large room, at once dormitory, study room, reception room, and a kitchen."<sup>6</sup>

The Canal Company donated the land. The resources at hand were twelve dollars.

<sup>4</sup> "Annals of the Propagation of the Faith," vol. I, Shaw, vol. I, p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Shaw, vol. I, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

Religion now being established in La Salle, the missionaries started out on their real work of visiting the scattered people, not only along the Canal, many miles eastward, but also along the Illinois River southward and to penetrate wherever they might find a Catholic settler.

Such journeys would take months at a time; and involved a rather solitary life, to which the Fathers were not accustomed.

Ottawa has been called "the oldest daughter of the La Salle Mission." It is fifteen miles distant from La Salle, and is the County seat of La Salle County. In 1838 Ottawa was a rising town, and claimed distinction as owning a fair proportion of the cultured citizens of the State in that day. An intelligent public spirit among the people in general augured very good results in regard to the financial support of a church. Here, too, the building of the Canal had brought together a number of Irish Catholics; but there was no leader among them, as Father Raho had found at LaSalle in Mr. Byrne. On April 21, 1838, the missionary set out on horseback for the town of Ottawa. On his arrival the town hall was offered him for the first services and until he could secure a more convenient place. To quote the eloquent historian of the LaSalle Mission once again:

"A crowded house, promptly at ten o'clock A. M. on Low Sunday raised the spirits and warmed the hearts of flock and Shepherd. After blessing the hall in preparation for the sacred mysteries, the priest began Mass. At the conclusion of the first Gospel he turned towards his auditory, a mixed congregation of Catholics and non-Catholic brethren, an ordinary thing for priest and people, in the early times, and explained the power of forgiving sins, as taught by Christ and His Church. The Gospel read on the Sunday furnished the subject of the discourse in the style of the preacher, earnest, argumentative, and practical; and though an Italian, the courage with which he tried to speak the language of Shakespeare, so utterly in its origin and pronunciation foreign to the origin and pronunciation of the language of the divine Dante, carried away the audience, and sowed the seeds of conversion to the church of forgiveness of sins."<sup>7</sup>

The Illinois and Michigan Canal Company donated a lot 120x60 feet for church purposes. Father Parodi was sent to take charge of the new mission, which he did by purchasing a carpenter shop at a cost of \$230.00 to be used as a temporary church.

But the efforts of the missionaries were to extend in ever widening circles. Beardstown, Meredosia, Virginia and Springfield were calling for the help and comfort of religion. Father Raho writes, June 21, 1838;

"I discovered about two hundred Catholics (Irish) scattered over sixty miles. For the space of a month I exercised among them the holy ministry, almost always traveled on foot, carrying on my shoulders

---

<sup>7</sup> Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

saddlebags containing altar necessities, and in my hand a carpet-bag, in open air, and far into the night, hearing confessions; in the day occupied teaching catechism.<sup>8</sup>

In another letter Father Raho writes:

"The success of my mission eight miles from Beardstown has been, that a small church is to be built there, and five children were baptised of whom one of Catholic parents; two of parents, one Catholic and the other Protestant, and the other of Protestant parents. That church is located in the town of Virginia, ten miles from Beardstown, on the road to Springfield, and chief town, or county seat of the new county of Cass, being the county of Morgan divided into two, Morgan and Cass."<sup>9</sup>

Father Parodi was an honest, pious soul, but no great financier nor persevering beggar. In writing to Father Timon, the Visitor, Father Raho makes this lament:

"Before I went to Meredosia I had given the directions for the building. My dear and pious companion, Mr. Parodi, during my absence, did neglect to collect the money the people had promised for the expenses. It caused the stop of the said building, and at my coming back, I found \$175.00 of debt; but through my exertion and your \$100.00, it came on tolerably well."

But Father Parodi's leniency in regard to church contributions was not the only trial Father Raho had to bear. The Irish immigrants had brought with them not only the glorious traditions of their religion, but also some of the warlike traditions of their respective clans. A strange spirit of rivalry between the Irish of the Black-water and the Irish Catholics of the Ban, the men of Munster and the men of Ulster and Connaught, brought a serious disturbance all along the borders of the Canal. One party was known as the "Corkonians" the other as the "Fardowns." Religion and the chivalrous spirit of Ireland were put aside for the gratification of the inflamed passion of strife. Up and down from Ottawa and LaSalle the missionaries hurried to win back these parishioners to meekness and charity. Most of the rioters were soon calmed and restored to order; but the leaders continued to foment the strife among the factions. They were arrested, tried and sent to prison. Father Raho says of them in the bitterness of his sorrow, August 13, 1838:

"It is said, and in fact it is so, that they, (the leaders) were worse than barbarians, savages, thirsty for the blood of their own countrymen. Now in this town of La Salle it is not so: quiet, peaceful, sober, generally, the people attend to their own duty. But on the contrary I do not know what to do with those of Ottawa. They beat and kill

---

<sup>8</sup> Shaw, vol. I, p. 42.

<sup>9</sup> Shaw, vol. I, p. 42.

their own countrymen; they destroy houses and crops, and they pretend to send away for their lives those of the north of Ireland, called 'Fardowns.' I am fatigued, I am tired. Would to God I could go away from among them. Though I must say that the Corkmen and the Fardowns are in the same balance . . . May Almighty God have mercy on them . . . Yesterday was buried a very good man who was killed by the other party "because he was not of them." It is said that the Rev. Father O'Meara, parish priest of Chicago from the altar has pronounced upon them the maledictions of God. I would wish to be among the Indians."<sup>10</sup>

But another dread visitor came to the La Salle Mission, in 1838, to try the Christian fortitude of Fathers Raho and Parodi; the cholera. As Father Shaw states in his *History of the La Salle Mission*:

"Twenty-four hours was the term set down by the destroyer, to begin and finish his work of carnage. His power he levelled first against the dwellers in the shanties, living along the bed of the Illinois River, drinking water made up from every source, feeding on vegetables of the rankest soil, careless of what they wore, how and where they slept. Next for visitation came the crowded boarding-houses; and lastly, the range of bottom, from Marseilles to Peru, was seized and occupied, and given over to the relentless foe . . . The plague-stricken region was, with hardly an exception, Catholic—the region where the great scandal had been conceived and born and waxed strong, and with a diabolical spirit, had drawn a few away from their allegiance to their God and Church."<sup>11</sup>

In regard to this dreadful affliction Father Raho writes to his Superior: "The season here has been very sickly, and we have been very busy in visiting the sick and burying the dead, and would to God, that His holy Justice was appeased. Still the people are afflicted with dangerous diseases. Day and night we both have been laboring, in order to afford the help of our religion to the poor sick. I do not know how long it will last. The will of God be done. Amen."<sup>12</sup>

During the months from July to December eighty-one of the able-bodied Catholic men of Peru and La Salle had succumbed to the cholera.

But full of faith and still undaunted the faithful servants of God labored and strove even more earnestly for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God. Amid their great sorrows and cares they opened on the first day of July 1838, the first Catholic school of the mission. A school for boys and girls it was, taught by a good Irishman named Scully, as Father Raho writes to the Superior General at Paris. The zealous Fathers realized, what Lord Derby said, that:

---

<sup>10</sup> Shaw, vol. I, p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> Idem, *ibidem*, p. 51.

<sup>12</sup> Shaw, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 51.

"Religion is not a thing apart from education, but is interwoven with its whole system; it is a principle which controls and regulates the whole mind, and secures the happiness of the people."<sup>13</sup>

"On the ridge of the valley where six years before Black Hawk and his warriors had roamed at will, arose on the Lapsley Farm the log school house, the humble beginning of the missionary's labors in favor of Catholic education.

So long delayed by adverse circumstances the church at La Salle was at last ready for dedication, under the title "The Most Holy Cross." Father Parodi conducted the dedication services. On Saturday evening, August 4th, the bell which Father Raho had brought from St. Louis, rang for the first time. The number of people in attendance, many coming from twelve to a hundred miles, was very great. On the 5th of August, Sunday both priests celebrate Holy Mass. The log house just dedicated to the service of God was the first church between St. Louis and Chicago. The following commemoration of the event was inscribed in the baptismal Record of the La Salle Mission:

"For the greater honor and glory of God. On the 5th day of August in the year of the Redemption, 1838, the fifth month after our coming into these parts, authorized by the Most Illustrious, and Most Rev. Joseph Rosati, C.M. Bishop of St. Louis, Rev. Wm. Aloysius Parodi, and a great multitude of the faithful present, this church in the village of La Salle, built owing to hard times, of wood, and through offerings of a faithful people, is dedicated to the honor of God, under the title of the Most Holy Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ. For testimony of which, etc.,

J. B. Raho, Miss.

Aloys. Parodi, Cong. Miss."<sup>14</sup>

As we have stated, the contracts for building the church and the Priests' residence had been given out on the same day. Both were completed about the same time. The Fathers now had their own home, as the Lord had His. The Rectory contained five rooms and a hall. The space between the logs, however, had not as yet been filled in, nor the plaster put on the walls; yet the missionaries felt happy in their comfortable quarters. Its calm solitude was to their taste.

"The priests ate their meals at the house of Grand-Mother Conner-ton, during the time that the church and house were being chinked and plastered with mud."

In regard to the spiritual condition of his people, Father Raho pours out his heart in a letter to Father Fiorello, the assistant of the General at Paris: "Help me sir, and dear confrere, to thank the Lord for the blessings He has deigned to pour out upon our ministry, and for the

<sup>13</sup> Shaw, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 52.

<sup>14</sup> Raho, Report to Synod of 1839, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

good among these people. Ten months ago these poor people were a prey to vice. They used a beverage, a detestable liquor they name whiskey, a very poison for soul and body. They remind one of that Nicolo spoken of in the life of St. Vincent. So extraordinary is the change, that we acknowledge it a very miracle of grace. A case of drunkenness has not been seen for five months; the sacraments are frequently received; no Sunday dawns without witnessing at the holy table a large number of communicants. The severity of the weather by no means lessens the number.”<sup>15</sup>

Father Raho was an accomplished musician. The organ was his favorite instrument. One of his first endeavors, therefore, was to form a choir for the musical service. On Christmas morn or rather at midnight the choir had its first grand opportunity. Father Raho, writing to Father Fiorello at Paris, thus describes the La Salle Christmas of 1838:

“The feast of Christmas has been celebrated in a very affecting manner. At eleven o’clock Christmas eve, the bell tolled, announcing the commencement of the office. Lauds were sung first, afterwards the Mass, during which select pieces of music, simple in composition and solemn in tone, accompanied with instruments, were executed, producing on the assembled worshippers a great effect. At the moment of the Elevation, from every side of the chapel were heard fervent sighs, which moved us to tears of joy and consolation; for they gave evidence of piety and elevation of all hearts at the remembrance of the great mystery and birth of our Savior among men. At dawn many Low Masses were offered up; at noon High Mass was celebrated, and in the afternoon Vespers and Benediction of the Holy Sacrament took place. An Immense concourse assisted at all devotions. The Protestants present were singularly affected.”<sup>16</sup>

The next important activity of Father Raho and his companions was the care for the orphans whom the great plague had left to his charity.

“Divine Providence afforded the means to save these poor orphans,” writes Father Raho. In the meantime, whilst I ran through the people of La Salle and Ottawa to pick them up, seven or eight had fallen victims to misery. Of the number of those then in my charge and in a most lamentable condition, two are already at St. Louis in care of the Sisters of Charity; a third is with the Mesdames of the Sacred Heart; a fourth with the Sisters of Loretto; three more are in homes of as many pious and charitable families.”<sup>17</sup>

A pious union, called the “Confraternity of Charity” was formed for the purpose of giving aid to the sick, both corporally and spiritually, corporally, in offering nourishment and giving necessary medicine during

<sup>15</sup> Shaw, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 70.

<sup>16</sup> *Idem*, *ibidem*, p. 75.

<sup>17</sup> *Idem*, *ibidem*, p. 77.

sickness; spiritually, in affording at the proper time, aid to receive the divine Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, to dispose the sick, in danger, to die well, and the ailing for the future, to live well. Father Raho's official report to the Synod of 1839 states: "In La Salle a Hospital and in Ottawa an Orphan Asylum under the directions of the Sisters of Charity are to be erected, grants of land having been made for the purpose." But both projects failed for want of means.

From Father Raho's report to the Bishop, dated December 1838, we will cite the following statistics concerning La Salle and Ottawa:

Baptisms numbered -----	95
Conversions to the Faith -----	4
First Communions -----	20
Paschal Communions -----	500
Marriages -----	7
Deaths -----	85

Total number of souls -----1000<sup>18</sup>

From the same report we gather a few other interesting points:

Ottawa, La Salle County, Ill., church to be commenced this (coming) year under the invocation of the Holy Trinity, attended every first and third Sunday of the month.

Dayton, La Salle County, attended every five weeks. Marseilles, La Salle County, the same.

Lacon, Putnam County, four times a year.

Virginia, Cass County Church to be erected under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin, attended four times a year.

Several other stations are visited by the Fathers of La Salle on the line of the Canal and Railroad.

This report is signed J. B. Raho and L. Parodi.<sup>19</sup>

The course of events now brings us to the chief city of the Illinois Valley, the Pimiteoui of the Red Man, called Peoria. Marquette tarried here for a while, the Franciscan Father Louis Hennepin reared a log church here, and La Salle established his Creve Coeur. The Jesuit Father James Gravier, V.G., arrived in 1689, and the baptisms in four years numbered 206. The Lazarist Fathers came about 150 years later, touching at Peoria in March 1838. A new era was about to begin in the land that bore a special blessing from the hands of Father Marquette. The Superior of the La Salle Mission, writing to the Superior General, Nozo, at Paris, France, January, 1840 says:

"When everything ran smoothly in and around La Salle House I hunted up during last summer and autumn large numbers of Catholics

<sup>18</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>19</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

scattered over the country and along the Illinois River from 90 to 120 miles southwest of La Salle, embracing people of different nationalities. The most desirable are found at the villages of Pekin, La Salle Prairie, Kickapoo, Black Partridge, and Lacon; the three last mentioned had never before seen a priest. At Peoria Catholics are like the gleanings of the harvest, exceedingly few, and the object of the meanness of the Presbyterians. However, in the court house I offered the Holy Mass and preached in presence of our select few, and a large number of Protestants. The sect of Presbyterians have a school that by no means meets the wishes of the citizens. Accordingly the people have urged me to put sisters in their places. Indeed many of them have offered me ground, on which to build a convent, which may be occupied either by the Sisters of the Visitation or by those of the Sacred Heart. If the plan, of which I have informed Bishop Rosati is feasible, it shall certainly give an impetus to the propagation of our holy religion.”<sup>20</sup>

In another letter Father Raho writes:

“There is a goodly number of Catholics in and around Pekin, the chief town of Tazewell County. Last October, 1839, the people of Pekin, without distinction of creed came together and unanimously resolved to build a Catholic church and conferred with me and Bishop Rosati, who spent a day among them, on the importance of the project.”<sup>21</sup>

Father Shaw thus sums up the results of Father Raho’s missionary labors in the outlying districts: “Above the town of Pekin, on the left bank of the Illinois or rather Peoria Lake, is Black Partridge of the early days—now no longer on the map, quite a center for German and French Catholics.” “So numerous” writes the son of St. Vincent, “that a chapel is needed, which I intend to build of timber the coming Spring, and would now commence, had I the money.” The French and Germans—among the latter are many of the Anabaptist sects—shall use it in common.” The building was erected and named St. Raphael’s.

Kickapoo, in Peoria County, on the same side of the river, about five miles inland, claims a more extended notice from the ubiquitous missionary. “I have taken special care of the Kickapoo Catholics, because they were more exposed to heretic attacks than the others, and notably from the attacks of the so-called Church of England bishop who tried to instil into them the poison of his errors. I judged, therefore, that the presence of the priest would be more necessary there than anywhere else; accordingly I ministered to these good people every month, making a specialty of explaining the doctrine of the church. To my instruction led by curiosity, a great number of Protestants came, who gradually opened their eyes to the truth, and laid aside

---

<sup>20</sup> Shaw, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 86.

<sup>21</sup> Shaw, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 86.

their prejudices, with which they had grown up against Catholics. Then to the satisfaction of all I proposed to build a chapel. A Catholic and a Protestant each offered a lot—I accepted the offer of the Catholic as more beneficial, and affording me the means to encircle the chapel with a cemetery. Measures were immediately taken and the cornerstone of the chapel, or if you wish, the church, was laid the first Sunday of last August, 1839, after celebrating the Holy Mass in a neighboring house, fitted up for the occasion. At the appointed hour for the cornerstone laying, I was on the spot, began to explain the ceremonies to the people who were in crowds; when our non-Catholic fellow citizens came up and said to me; that they desired, as the Catholics, to have a share in my institution, and the chapel would be too small to contain the Catholic and non-Catholic people. I was obliged to broaden the foundations.”<sup>22</sup>

The church at Kickapoo was placed under the patronage of St. Patrick, the Apostle of the Irish people. The dedication took place on August 4, 1839. The edifice was of stone. This authentic account will naturally destroy the legend that the little stone chapel in the cemetery at Kickapoo, on the road from Brimfield to Peoria, is the oldest church now standing in Illinois. It was indeed, built by Father Raho, but not in 1827. The correct date given by Father Raho himself is 1839. Kickapoo is today a village of about 200 souls, and only recently received a new church.

The Fall of 1839 brought new joy to the hearts of our missionaries; first the addition of Father Cercos to the missionary band and then, the visit of Bishop Rosati and Father Timon to La Salle. Father Raho thus records the arrival and its purpose.

“At La Salle, our ordinary residence, we welcomed last October 13th, 1839, Bishop Rosati and our Visitor Father Timon. During the ten days the Bishop remained, he administered confirmation to fifty-eight persons, chiefly grown people, four of the converts I baptized last Holy Week. On the Sunday within the Octave of our holy founder, Saint Vincent, the patron of our Confraternity of Charity, thirty-two of our children made their first communion, and the association of charity in a body approached the Holy Table. Directly afterwards confirmation followed, the good Bishop and Father Timon having previously preached for them a mission of eight days.”<sup>23</sup>

The same year the mission was strengthened by the arrival of Father Estany, giving the church-builder and organizer more freedom to explore the forests and prairies, the creeks and hollows of his wide domain for the only treasure he really cared for, Catholic settlers.

---

<sup>22</sup> Shaw, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 89.

<sup>23</sup> *Idem*, *ibidem*, vol. I, p. 91.

Father Jerome Cercos was born at Regassa, Spain, January 30, 1812. He entered the novitiate of the Vincentians at Madrid and there received Holy Orders. He arrived at the Barrens November 27, 1838, an exile from Spain. Father Cercos died at Cape Girardeau, Mo., March 28, 1845.

Father Eudaldo Estany, another exile from Spain, was ordained in Madrid, and came to the Barrens, November 27, 1838. He was sent to La Salle, August 20th, 1839, recalled April 23rd, 1840, and was sent to Texas, on May 3rd, 1840.

At La Salle a plot of ground was bought and dedicated as a Catholic Cemetery. In the year 1840 the rashness of the State Legislature brought bankruptcy upon Illinois. The monetary difficulties were, of course, severely felt by the missionaries who were constantly making expenses for buildings necessary in the various towns of their mission. On borrowed capital the work went on: In the meantime St. Augustine, in Knox County, and the neighborhood of Wyoming were visited by Father Raho, whilst Dixon and Palestine Grove were taken into the great missionary fold. And now another great surprise came to Fathers Raho and Parodi and their two assistants: the news that Bishop Rosati had, on November 39, 1841, consecrated Peter Richard Kenrick as his coadjutor, and that this Prelate would visit the mission of La Salle and its dependencies some time in the summer of 1842.

A new era had dawned upon the Church in the Mississippi Valley, though but few, at that time, could realize it. Bishop Kenrick arrived at La Salle on Saturday, July 23, and was enthusiastically welcomed by priests and people. The next day twenty-two members of the Church were confirmed. Black Partridge, in Woodford County, was next visited, where twenty-three, all Germans, were confirmed on July 28th, Kickapoo, an inland village, was reached on July 30. On the next day sixteen were confirmed. In Peoria only six received the sacrament. On July 3rd, Bishop Kenrick departed from Peoria for St. Louis.

At the fifth Provincial Council of Baltimore the erection of the diocese of Chicago, including all the State of Illinois, was proposed to the Holy See. The proposal was approved by Rome, and the Right Rev. William Quarter was consecrated first Bishop of Chicago on Sunday, March 10, 1844. With this change we must take leave of the flourishing Mission of La Salle and its dependencies. They had ceased to be a part of the Diocese of St. Louis under Bishop Rosati.

## ST. MICHAEL'S OF FREDERICKTOWN AND FATHER CELLINI

St. Michael's of Fredericktown is one of the earliest Catholic settlements in this state: Its church of St. Michael, a log structure, was built by Father Henry Pratte, pastor of Ste. Genevieve: its first parishioners were French families from New Bourbon, St. Genevieve and Grand River, who founded the village of St. Michael's shortly after 1799. Schoolcraft in 1819 describes it as follows: "St. Michael is situated on a plain on Village Creek, which falls into the river St. Francis, a mile below. It is an old French Village, of about fifty houses, including several stores, and the Post Office, and lies in the center of the richest farming district in Madison County. The seat of Justice for the County has lately been fixed on rising ground, about six hundred yards south of the village, and a town laid out there called Fredericktown. Several emigrants have lately located themselves in St. Michael's. And since the County Seat has been fixed in its vicinity, it has assumed a thriving appearance. The Mine La Motte lies two miles north of the village."<sup>1</sup>

In 1827 when St. Louis was made a Diocese under Bishop Rosati St. Michael became a full-fledged Parish, with the Rev. Anthony Potini as the first resident Pastor.

The Baptismal Record entitled, "Register of the Baptisms in the Parish of St. Michael, State of Missouri, Madison County, in the Diocese of Bishop Rosati," contains as its first entry: "I, the undersigned, in the year 1827 baptized Baptist William, son of Louis Bernier and his wife, Archange Deguire, born on the 17th of July, 1827. Sponsors: Baptist Deguire and Judith Caland. A. Potini, Miss." The name of Father Potini occurs in the register until December 26th, 1828, when Father Cellini takes his place.

Father Cellini, who now enters upon the scene, was a man of consequence in his day, farsighted and capable; a man versed in a number of sciences and arts, among them medicine and surgery, a strong character, zealous and at times impatient of delays, but always filled with the spirit of his priestly calling.

It was on May 10th, 1827, that Father Cellini, bought from Nathaniel Cook several hundred acres of land in the immediate vicinity of Fredericktown, extending from the Little St. Francis River to a point where College Avenue crosses the Saline, thus enclosing the entire

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, "A Visit to the Mining Districts of Arkansas and Missouri."

village on the South and West. By this transfer Father Cellini took title to the greater portion of the present site of Fredericktown.

Two years later, April 1st, 1829, Rev Francis Cellini, whose residence was then at Prairie du Rocher, Randolph County, Illinois, conveyed all this property, for a consideration of two thousand dollars (\$2000.00) to Mary S. Smith, the widow of Charles Smith, and on April 24th, 1829, Mary S. Smith deeded all the foregoing property to Rev. Francis Cellini, except a tract of two hundred acres, taken therefrom and conveyed by her to Santee. The land deeded by Mary S. Smith to Father Cellini included the four acres, which today comprise the church property of St. Michael's in Fredericktown, as Father Francis Cellini later on conveyed the same to Bishop Rosati and his successors in office to hold in trust for the benefit of the Congregation of the Parish of St. Michael.<sup>2</sup>

At the time of Father Cellini's advent, the Parish of St. Michael appeared as a rather straggling and struggling community, with its three villages in close proximity, leisurely vying with each other for the supremacy. The village on the hill, Fredericktown, came out as victor over the old village of St. Michael built on the lower ground just beyond the Saline, and gradually drew away all the life, the New Village on Village Creek had ever enjoyed.

The town grew but slowly. In 1822 there were in it fifty dwellings, with about two hundred and fifty inhabitants. In 1836 the population was but three hundred all told. The rest of the congregation was scattered over the county, a fair proportion of it at Mine La Motte. According to Bishop Rosati's Report to the Leopoldine Society in Vienna March 10, 1830, there were two hundred Catholics in the Parish of St. Michael, mostly French, working in the mines.<sup>3</sup> But as the Catholic population was increasing, Father Cellini in 1829 started the work of building a church on his land in Fredericktown. The old log church at the Village was taken down, for the sake of the material to be used in the erection of the new structure. The original presbytery, the "large frame house," was on what is now called West Main Street, and the reconstructed log church stood parallel with the southern boundary of the cemetery, with the sanctuary to the East. From there a road led down the hill through what is now a part of the graveyard to the old village of St. Michael across the creek. The church retained the name of St. Michael the Archangel, though the town had lost it. The church must have been completed by October 1, 1831, for on that date Bishop Rosati records in his Diary that he,

---

<sup>2</sup> Records of Madison County, Missouri.

<sup>3</sup> Reports of the Leopoldine Society for 1830, a publication of great importance for the History of the Church in America, though as yet but insufficiently known.

in company with the Fathers Cellini, Rondot, Loisel, Mascaroni, Hilary Tucker, Hamilton, Shannon and Cotter, proceeded from the Barrens, (Perryville) to St. Michael's, on which occasion their conveyance broke down on the road about four miles from their destination. On Sunday, October 2, the Bishop celebrated Mass in the private chapel of Father Cellini, but attended the Solemn High-Mass in the Church. Father Cellini was the celebrant on this occasion, whilst Father Rondot preached in French. In the afternoon the Bishop with his priests chanted the Vespers, and the Bishop gave an English address. On October 4th, they all made an excursion to the Big St. Francis River. I believe this notable visit of the Bishop was for the purpose of dedicating the new church of St. Michael.

A good start was now made; but greater things were in preparation. Through the piety and generous spirit of Madam Smith, who had transferred her home from Opelousas to Fredericktown, Father Cellini was enabled to found the first institution for higher learning in the County, the Convent and Academy of the Sisters of Loretto. It was on the 26th day of May, 1832, that the zealous Pastor of St. Michael's called on Bishop Rosati at the Barrens and obtained from him the necessary permission for the Sisters of Loretto to found a new House of their Order in the Parish of St. Michael near Fredericktown.<sup>4</sup> Father Cellini had built a large house for this purpose on his land near the present site of Richard Slaughter's residence. This house was occupied by the Sisters of Loretto, and a school for girls was opened at once with an attendance of about forty pupils. A prospectus of the new institution appeared in the "*Shepherd of the Valley*" at various times from 1832-1834.<sup>5</sup> We subjoin a few of its interesting items: "The Sisters of Loretto have established a house of education at Fredericktown, Madison County, Mo., under the immediate direction of Rev. Francis Cellini. They will teach Reading, Writing, Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Painting, French, Needle-work, Embroidery, Music, etc. Young Ladies of any religious profession will be received without the least prejudice. Though the teachers profess the Roman Catholic religion, yet no one shall be the least troubled with regard to their peculiar religious opinions, nor will any undue influence be made over their belief.

The first Sisters were:

Sister Juliana	-----	Anna Wathen, Superior
Sister Leocadia	-----	Maria Anna Carney
Sister Theresia Augustina	-----	Maria McSorley

<sup>4</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>5</sup> "*Shepherd of the Valley*" was the first Catholic paper published west of the Mississippi River. There is an incomplete file in the Library of St. Louis University.

Sister Lucia	-----	Anna Moore
Sister Frances	-----	Susan Strother
Sister Mary Josephina	-----	Adelaide Obuchon

On June 10, 1833, Bishop Rosati celebrated Mass in the convent chapel and gave the habit to the postulant Anna Fenwick. On the previous day the Bishop had administered the sacrament of Confirmation in the church of St. Michael to fifty-four persons, fourteen of them being converts to the Faith. Lewis Tucker, then in deaconship orders, was present on this occasion and, returning with the Bishop to the Seminary, remained there until September when he was raised to the Priesthood in the Cathedral, Sunday, September 22, 1834. After a short stay with the Bishop, Father Tucker was sent as assistant of Father Cellini to St. Michael's where he officiated until 1835. During December 1834, Father St. Cyr attended St. Michael's for a short while.<sup>6</sup>

From Bishop Rosati's Diary we learn that both Father Cellini's house and the Sisters' Convent had private chapels, which were also used for the public services until the church was completed.

During the year 1834 Father Cellini was absent from St. Michael's for a longer period, for in Vol. II, No. 38 of the "*Shepherd of the Valley*," we find the following notice: "The Catholics and inhabitants of Madison County will learn with a great deal of pleasure that Father F. Cellini arrived in perfect health on the Steamer *Majestic*." On June 7th, he returned to St. Michael's. On November 10th, Bishop Rosati says, that he rode with Father Cellini ten miles through the rain on his way to Fredericktown; and on Sunday, November 16th, he assisted at Solemn High-Mass sung by Father Lewis Tucker, and preached a sermon in English, and then administered holy Confirmation to twelve persons. On November 20th, Father Cellini accompanied the Bishop to Old Mines, both riding on horse-back. On the return trip the Bishop lost his pectoral cross, the gold chain having been broken. In the annual Report of Bishop Rosati for 1834, both Cellini and Tucker are given as pastors. In the Convent list the following Sisters are named:

Sister Benedicta	-----	Julia Fenwick, Superior
Sister Leocadia	-----	Mary A. Carney
Sister Lucia	-----	Anna Moore
Sister Maria Agnes	-----	Elizabeth Tucker
Sister Maria Josephina	-----	Adelaide Obuchon
Sister Maria Anna	-----	Anna Fenwick

---

<sup>6</sup> Father Saint Cyr was the first resident priest of St. Chicago, which was then under the Bishop of St. Louis.

The foundation did not prosper. After a few years, April 1836, the school was discontinued for lack of patronage and encouragement, and the building itself was consumed by fire in 1847.

It will be remembered that, in recounting the many accomplishments of Father Cellini, Father Rosati wrote: "He is our Procurator, Physician, Mailman, Mason." As Procurator and Mason, Father Cellini is now known to us; but what about his character as Physician?

On April 24th, 1845, Bishop Rosati relates in his Diary, that he journeyed from Ste. Genevieve to St. Michael and took his abode with Father Cellini until May 14th, "*valetudinis recuperandae causa.*" for the purpose of regaining his health. And on April 20, 1836, Father Borgna, came to Fredericktown with an almost hopeless case of paralysis which deprived him of the use of his hand, seeking relief and healing at the hands of his old friend. It may seem strange, that a Catholic priest, a physician of souls, is here described as a practitioner of the art of healing the ills of the body. In fact, this is something unheard of at the present day, except perhaps in the missions of Darkest Africa. But we must recall the fact, that Father Cellini came to this country in 1818, when all its arts of civilized life were as yet in their infancy. Father John Odin, C.M., afterwards Archbishop of New Orleans, writes shortly after his ordination in 1823, to a friend in Europe: "Bishop Rosati wishes, that you could engage a good physician to come and settle at the Seminary of the Barrens. A good doctor is unknown throughout the surrounding country. Sickness is continual, and the poor people are left to languish or die entirely destitute of help. By this means we might also win many Protestants. They are extremely appreciative of kindness. Moreover, we greatly desire to give the brothers, and even the priests, who will have the happiness of going among the savages, some knowledge of medicine. A single cure would make the reputation of a missionary and gain ready access for him everywhere. Bishop Rosati would give this physician free lodging, and everything needed. His calls would bring him in at least two thousand francs. The woods are full of medicinal plants."<sup>7</sup> From this it is plain, how sadly Father Cellini's medical knowledge and skill were missed after his departure from the Barrens. But everywhere in the country physicians were few and far between, and wherever the good Father found himself, he also found bodily miseries and ills that called forth his sympathy and healing power. Ever ready to hasten to the assistance of the sick and suffering, he never, according to universal testimony, accepted any fee for his services. Mrs. Armand B. Peugnet, a Catholic lady of St. Louis, now in her ninetieth year, well remembers the good Father Cellini as a

<sup>7</sup> "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," vol. I, p. 76. Records, vol. XIV, p. 190.

"great physician" and says, that her own mother, being very sick, was placed under his medical as well as spiritual care. She further states that, when Father Cellini removed from Fredericktown to St. Louis, the children of the city would be brought to him to be vaccinated, and that he always gave the most careful directions to safeguard their health. Father Cellini must, therefore, be enrolled among the pioneers of medical science in the State of Missouri. A contributor to the *Church Progress* of St. Louis, probably the learned Msgr. William Walsh of St. Bridget's, years ago wrote that "Father Cellini was the compounder of a medicine at one time quite famous. It was for sale by all druggists in St. Louis and was called Cellinian Balm." The Rescript from the Church-authorities at Rome, permitting Father Cellini to practice as a physician, but not as a surgeon, is dated December 11, 1819.<sup>8</sup>

As to Father Cellini's quality as a priest we need but refer to the large number of converts gained by his example and instructions. A man of strong, sincere convictions, he was not of the disputatious kind, but rather intent to win over the soul by the clear light of truth. *Veritas prevalebit*, he thought, truth must prevail; there is no need of the persuasive words of human eloquence. Father Cellini had no high opinion of what is commonly called eloquent preaching. He was far from indulging in that flowery kind of speech, that tickles the sense and leaves the heart unmoved. He believed that the sermons that the people really needed were the plain, practical, instructive kind. He used to say that a priest should preach somewhat after this manner: "Miss mass on Sunday, mortal sin; slander your neighbor, mortal sin" and so on. Father Cellini had received his education in Italy. Italian was his mother tongue. But this melodious language was of no practical use to him, as his field of labor lay among the French and Americans. The zealous Father preached every Sunday

---

<sup>8</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese. Among the numerous scraps of information Father Saulnier marked down in his "Every Day Book," Monsignor Holweck found the recipe for the "Cellinian Balm:"

"Gum Aloes socotorine -----	ounces 12
Gum Myrrhe -----	ounces 6
Gum Mastich -----	ounces 6
Gum Olivarium -----	ounces 6
Mace -----	ounces 6
Peruvian Balsam -----	ounces 6

Bruise the Gums and Mace and put them all in a convenient demijohn, with four gallons of good brandy, from the beginning of July until the middle of August, in the heat of the sun shaking it every day." Father Cellini had, through the good offices of Bishop Du Bourg, received express permission from Pope Gregory to practice medicine in the missions of America. As to his medical knowledge and skill there never was any doubt.

in French or English, but never could, in these alien tongues, acquire that perfect mastery and easy fluency he possessed in the Italian. Besides he was subject to a slight stammer in his speech, which was scarcely noticeable except when the right word failed him. Many a time the good Father in his discourse, knowing perfectly well what he intended to say, but not finding the proper word to express his meaning, would make a pause and look at Mr. Simon Guignon, his old and intimate friend, who sat in the first pew just below the preacher. And Mr. Guignon, who as a rule, knew from the context, what word was wanted, regularly, suggested it in a subdued but perfectly audible tone. The Rev. Father would repeat the word and proceed with his sermon, as though nothing had happened.

In the time of which we are writing, it was deemed but natural to be owner of slaves. In certain parts of the country it was considered nothing short of criminal fanaticism to advocate the abolition of slavery or to question its justice and usefulness; hence the general rule throughout the southern states that the wealthier classes were slave-holders. Father Cellini, or rather his house-keeper, Madam Smith, was no exception to the rule. But if these slaves had to be slaves, they were fortunate indeed in having a good master. That they were treated most kindly may be inferred from a remark frequently made by old Jerry, one of Father Cellini's slaves. Many a time in after years the old man would refer to the "powerful good coffee we used to have at old Father Cellini's in Fredericktown. "Why it was so strong it would hold up a spoon." Father Cellini in his last will bequeathed his slaves as well as his other property to Archbishop Kenrick. But the Archbishop let them all go, with the exception of old Jerry and Jerry's old woman, Chloe; Jerry and Chloe he did not let go, because they had nowhere to go to. He kept them and kindly provided for them until their death.

As an indication of the high regard in which Father Cellini's wisdom and unblemished character was held by all, we would mention that in the Synod of 1839, he was appointed one of the seven confessors having the most extended faculties, and in 1845 was made by Bishop Kenrick Vicar-General of the Diocese of St. Louis, offices, indeed, more honorable than onerous, as befitting a man of long and faithful service.

When old age had unnerved the good Father's strength for active ministerial duty, he removed to St. Louis and spent his remaining years in the mansion on Marion Street, built and fitted up by Madam Smith, that is now the home of the Guardian Angel Settlement near St. Vincent's Church in St. Louis. He died on the 6th of January, 1849. He was buried from St. Vincent's Church, Monday January 8th, 1849, after Solemn High-Mass. His remains were laid to rest in St. Vincent's Cemetery, and afterwards reinterred in Calvary. On

the simple tombstone that marks his last resting place is the inscription: "Pray for the soul of Very Rev. Francis Cellini, Vicar-General of this diocese. He died on the Feast of the Epiphany." Father Cellini was in his sixty-eighth year when he died. On the eve of the Epiphany, 1819 he arrived at St. Mary's of the Barrens, and on the Feast of the Epiphany 1849, he passed into Eternity.

It is a strange coincidence that Madam Mary Sentee Smith, died in the same house, and only some few hours after Father Cellini. Four days after the event, January 10, 1849, Archbishop Kenrick wrote an interesting letter to Father Louis Tucker, the successor of Father Cellini in St. Michaels, Fredericktown:

"Before the receipt of this letter you will have probably heard of the death of Rev. Mr. Cellini and of Madam Smith which took place on the same day: Mr. Cellini having died on the 6th, inst, at 10 o'clock, and Mrs. Smith on the following morning at 7 o'clock. You are aware that this excellent lady had lately several—at least two—attacks of paralysis. About nine weeks ago she fell, probably in consequence of an attack of that nature and seriously hurt herself. For several weeks she appeared to be beyond all rational hope of ultimate recovery; but within two or three weeks preceding her death, she appeared to revive, and was so far restored to health, as to be able to sit up in a chair, although she could not rise without assistance. A few days before Christmas, Rev. Mr. Cellini cut his finger, while sharpening a knife. He succeeded at length, after a considerable loss of blood, in stopping the blood; but it is thought that he did not take sufficient precaution to prevent the cold, which was then very severe, from affecting the wound. For several days he suffered a great deal of pain; being unable to rest at night in consequence of his wound. Besides this he fell on his back, while walking on the ice in his yard, and complained at one time more of the injury received from the fall than from the wound. On Christmas day he said one Mass, but with considerable difficulty. His sufferings continued, without however, seriously alarming any person, or even himself, until the 31st of December, when he appeared to be much better; and continued for three or four days, to be, as it was thought, improving, but on the night of Wednesday to Thursday he had a violent chill or spasm, which appeared to have entirely prostrated his system, as it was followed by a kind of lethargy, in which while he appeared to be, and in fact was, perfectly conscious, he was unable to express himself, except on a very few occasions. He received the last sacraments with a great deal of piety, and expired about twenty-four hours after, as already stated. Mr. Cellini's illness and the serious character of it assumed on the 4th inst. appears to have brought on Mrs. Smith a violent chill, which lasted from nine o'clock in the evening of the 4th, to day-light on the morning of the fifth. It was followed

by a fever and a total prostration of strength, so that this good lady appeared insensible to the state of Mr. Cellini, although I am convinced that her apparent insensibility—she never asked anyone about him—was the result of her knowledge of his extreme danger and of his death, when it took place. She died, as might have been expected a most edifying death; and appeared to retain her consciousness to the last moment.

They were both buried on Monday (January 8th), in St. Vincent's Cemetery. Rev. Mr. Cellini in the morning, after Office and Mass, at which all the clergy assisted; and Madame Smith in the afternoon. The Ladies of the Sacred Heart claimed the privilege of having the remains of Mrs. Smith deposited in their lot in the grave yard.—Requiescant in Pace.

"I have given you these details, because independent of the regard which both the deceased had for you, it will enable you to gratify your flock or, at least, those belonging to it, who were the personal friends of the departed.

By his will, Rev. Mr. Cellini has left all that he had to us, for the purpose of establishing an asylum for aged priests, or such as might be prevented by infirmity from discharging the active duties of the ministry. I would be glad if you would ask Mr. Cox, who I believe, was Mr. Cellini's agent, for whatever information he can impart to me in relation to the property formerly owned by Mr. Cellini in Madison County.—whether Mr. Cellini has transferred all or any, and which, or the tracts of which I find by his papers that he was at one time, the owner. Whether there be any and how much money due to Mr. Cellini in consequence of such transfer; how secured, and when payable.

Wishing you many happy years and above all, the "Annos aeternos" which alone are worth wishing for, I remain, Rev. Dear Sir etc.

†Peter Richard

Archbishop of St. Louis."<sup>9</sup>

John G. Shea's *History of the Catholic Church in the United States* adverts to this fact that as a signal close to Father Cellini's lifelong desire of founding some kind of a charitable institution:

"The bequest of Rev. Francis Cellini, who thirty years before resigned a benefice in Europe to labor in the American Missions was mentioned by Archbishop Kenrick in his synod of 1850. This good priest left all he possessed to found a home for priests broken by age or ill health. Trustees were appointed to carry out his pious wish, and an annual Requiem Mass was established."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>10</sup> Shea, John G., "History of the Catholic Church in the United States," vol. IV, p. 221.

The pious wish of the founder was fulfilled in a way he certainly never dreamt of. As there were no priests in St. Louis at the time who felt any necessity or even any inclination to enter a "House for priests broken by age or ill health," Father Cellini's mansion was turned over to the Visitation Nuns who had been driven from their convent in Kaskaskia by the flood of 1844, as a temporary house. It was next occupied by the Sisters of Charity for an Insane Asylum, then by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd until their Convent at Seventeenth and Chestnut Streets was completed; then came the Christian Brothers and dwelt here until their College on Eighth and Cerre Streets was ready for occupancy; then the old house became the Foundling Asylum of the Sisters of Charity, whilst their new Asylum for homeless babies on Tenth and O'Fallon Streets was building, and lastly it was converted into a Home for friendless and orphan girls of over twelve years of age. After all these changes, this cradle of many charitable institutions, in 1911, became the house of the Guardian Angel Settlement, including a day-nursery, a kindergarten, sewing school, cooking school, lunch room, Sunday School, working girl's club, play grounds, provision depot and employment bureau, all conducted by the Sisters of Charity assisted by a host of friends from among the best families of the city.

Here in the one-time private chapel of Father Francis Cellini the annual Requiem Mass for the departed founders of the institution is solemnly chanted on the day of their deaths.

## THE FIRST SYNOD OF ST. LOUIS

Twenty years had now elapsed since Bishop Rosati's feet had touched the soil of his well beloved Missouri, twenty years of pious solicitude, toilsome labor, and many sorrows endured in patience. About fifteen years of this period he had borne the honor and burden of the episcopate, first as coadjutor of Bishop Du Bourg, then as Bishop of St. Louis in his own right.

During all these years the feet of his companions in spiritual arms, "*pedes evangelizantium pacem*," had opened the pathways through the primeval forests and prairies, or passed over the ways that had been made by others, to carry the Gospel of peace to all the widely scattered people. From all parts of his vast diocese these his fellow-laborers had sent him messages, gladsome often, despondent at times, and even fretful, but scarcely ever unkind to him, their apostolic Father and Friend. Much good work, some indifferent attempts, and one or two apparent failures, stood to the credit of his priests, regular and diocesan. It seemed well, to assemble this little company, the leaders of the hosts of God, in a Diocesan Synod, in order to review the work accomplished and to give new directions and possibly inspirations. By an encyclical letter dated January 26th, 1839 all the priests having the care of souls within the diocese were called to meet at St. Louis Cathedral, on Sunday, April 21st. The Synod opened with Solemn High-Mass in honor of the Holy Ghost, at which the Bishop addressed the assembled priests and people in French and English: After Pontifical Vespers had been chanted in the afternoon there followed the roll call of the clergy. Twenty-two of the diocesan clergy, and seventeen members of religious orders answered the call of their name, seventeen were reported absent and excused. Monday and the three following days were spent by the Bishop and his priests in a retreat given by the Jesuit Father Verhaegen. The Synod proper began on Friday. But before we recount the various acts of the Synod, we would pass in review the members, together with their respective field of labor and its relative importance.<sup>1</sup>

The Cathedral of St. Louis was represented by Bishop Rosati, and four vicars, Joseph Lutz, James Fontbonne, Joseph Renaud, John Peter Fischer. It numbered 12,000 souls, had 352 Baptisms, 18 converts, 141 marriages, 87 funerals. The church building was of stone.

<sup>1</sup> The official reports of the various parishes to the Synod are preserved in the Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

St. Francis Xavier Church in St. Louis, attended by the Jesuit Fathers of the St. Louis College, numbered 164 souls, had 45 baptisms; 7 marriages; 14 converts and 8 funerals. The priests at the College were the Jesuit Fathers Peter Verhaegen, John Elet, George Carrel, Peter Verheyden and Francis Emig. The Chapel of St. Francis Xavier at Lowell was attended by Father John Shoenmakers, S. J., whilst the Chapels at the Hospital and at the Academy of the Sacred Heart were in charge of the Cathedral Clergy.

The Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel at Carondelet, had for its pastor the Reverend Edmond Saulnier. It possessed a membership of 1,400 souls, and reported 57 Baptisms; 6 Marriages; 4 Converts and 14 Funerals. The building was of stone. St. Ferdinand's Church at Florissant, with 1,200 members, 49 Baptisms; 10 Marriages; 4 Converts and 25 Funerals, was in charge of the Jesuit Father T. Gleizal, S. J. The Church was a brick-structure. St. Peter's Church, at Gravois, (now Kirkwood) under the care of Father P. R. Donnelly, reported a membership of 440, but no Baptisms, Marriages or Funerals. At the time of the Synod Father Hilary Tucker was in temporary charge. The church was built of stone. St. Charles Boromeo Church of St. Charles, numbered 1,200 souls, with 35 Baptisms; 9 Marriages; 7 Converts and 44 Funerals. The church was of stone. Rev. Peter J. Smedts, S. J. was the pastor. Dardenne, now St. Peters, had a church of wood, dedicated to St. Peter, with Father Christian W. Walters, S. J., as pastor. The membership amounted to 400 souls. The Baptisms were 22; Marriages 8; Converts 3; Funerals 15; Father Walters also attended St. Simon's Church, at Louisville, Lincoln County, where there was a log-chapel. Portage des Sioux had a brick Church dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi, with a membership of 300 souls: the number of Baptisms was 19; Marriages 2; Funerals 14. The Jesuit Father Jodocus Van Assche was its pastor. St. Joachim's Church at Old Mines, Washington County, lately built by Father Bouillier, now under the pastorship of his brothers in religion, Fathers Peter Doutreluingne and Bartholomew Rollando, together with St. Stephan's at Richwoods reported 1,000 souls, 82 Baptisms; 5 Marriages; and 10 Funerals.

The Church at Potosi in the same County, was dedicated to St. James the Greater. It had a membership of 322 souls. The spiritual record for the year was 24 Baptisms; 3 Marriages; 10 Converts; 6 Funerals. Father Lewis Tucker was its pastor. The building was of brick. St. Michael's Church at Fredericktown had for its pastor the Very Reverend Francis Cellini. The number of souls is reported as 500, of Baptisms 36; Marriages 1; Funerals 9. Ste. Genevieve, the mother-church of St. Michaels, and Old Mines, boasted of a fine stone church, lately erected by its pastor, the Lazarist Father, F. X. Dahmen. He had

for his assistant Father Hyppolitus Gandolfo. The parish numbered 1,446 souls, had 60 Baptisms; 17 Marriages; 7 Converts and 32 Funerals. St. Anne's Church at Little Canada, now French Village, in St. Francois County, was administered by Father Gandolfo, C. M. of Ste. Genevieve and had a membership of 154 souls, 10 Baptisms; 5 Marriages; 10 Converts; and 3 Funerals. St. Marys Church, at the Barrens in Perry County was the spiritual center of a wide district, embracing 3,400 souls. Its spiritual record for 1838 was 102 Baptisms; 15 Marriages, 54 Converts and 32 Funerals. The Church was built of stone. Father John Timon, Visitor of the Congregation of the Mission, is given as the Pastor of St. Mary's; Fathers John M. Odin, John B. Tornatore and Hector Figari were attached to the Seminary and College. Another member of the Congregation, Father M. Domenech was soon to succeed Father Joseph Wiseman in the care of St. Joseph's Church at Apple Creek, a Congregation of 760 souls. 15 Baptisms; 2 Marriages, 4 Converts and 3 funerals were his record.

St. John the Baptist's Church, the successor of Father Gibault's Church of St. Isidore, at New Madrid, was now in charge of Father Ambrose Heim. The small frame building had to be removed time and time again, so as not to be carried away by the inroads of the Mississippi. There were 400 souls within its jurisdiction; 28 Baptisms; 6 Marriages; 4 Converts and 9 Funerals were reported by Father Heim. St. Vincents Church, at Cape Girardeau with its new stone church, was making remarkable progress through conversions, which in 1838 numbered 28. Under Father John Brands as pastor, the membership had advanced within a few years from almost nothing to 252 souls, with 42 Baptisms; 6 Marriages; and 9 Funerals. St. Francis de Sales Church in Tywappity Bottom, Scott County, had a log-church, and was attended by Father Michael Collins, C. M.

The Church of St. Paul's, Salt River, Ralls County with its scattered membership of 1,000 souls, was still in charge of Father Peter P. Lefevere, who reported 29 Baptisms, 12 Marriages; 4 Converts and 7 Funerals. St. Stephen's Church at Indian Creek, in Monroe County was attended by the same zealous missionary, Father Lefevere. Churches were built of logs. St. Joseph's Church in New Westphalia, Osage County, was then the chosen center of the Jesuit Father F. Helias de Huddeghem's missions in central Missouri. It numbered 700 souls, and reported 15 Baptisms; 6 Marriages; 6 Converts and 9 Funerals. St. Francis Borgia Church in Washington, Franklin County, with 600 souls had for its pastor Father Henry Meinkmann, to be succeeded within a year by the Jesuit Father James Busschotts. Both churches were of wood. All these churches with resident priests here enumerated were

located in the State of Missouri; In addition to them ,the following stations were attended, as dependencies of the established parishes:

*From St. Louis:* 1. Jefferson Barracks, 2. Johnston, 3. Manchester.

*From Carondelet:* 1. River des Peres, 2. Meramee.

*From Old Mines:* 1. Mine La Motte, 2. Aubuchon.

*From Potosi:* 1. Timmer Settlement.

*From Ste. Genevieve:* 1. Riviere aux Vases, 2. Riviere Establishment.

*From the Barrens:* 1. Bois Brule, 2. Brazeau, 3. New Tennessee, 4. Chester, Illinois.

*From New Madrid:* 1. Little Prairie, 2. Grand River.

*From Cape Girardeau:* 1. Jackson, 2. Portage.

*From Salt River:* 1. Cincinnati, 2. Pine Creek, 3. Wyaconda, 4. Cedar Creek, 5. North Santa Fe, 6. Marion City, 7. Half-Indian Tract—all in north-eastern Missouri.

*From Westphalia:* 1. Cotes Sans Dessein, 2. Jefferson City, 3. Baileys Creek, 4. Hancock Prairie, 5. Portland, 6. Fulton, 7. New Boston, 8. Rocheport, 9. Fayette, 10. Mount Pleasant, 11. Loose Creek, 12. Bourbeuse.

*From Washington:* 1. Columbia, 2. Marthasville (Dutzow).

Crossing the river to the Illinois side, we find in St. Clair County the ancient parish Church of the Holy Family with its congregation of 1,400 souls. Its pastor is the proto-priest of St. Louis, Father Francis Regis Loisel.

Cahokia is very proud of its Convent School conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Father Loisel administered 50 Baptisms, assisted at 25 Weddings and 45 Funerals and gained only 3 Converts, probably because all the people of Cahokia were already Catholics. The Church is of wood, the oldest church-building in the diocese, after the collapse of the old stone-church at Kaskaskia. In the vicinity of Cahokia there are two other congregations with wooden churches, St. Philip's at French Village, attended by Father Loisel, and St. Thadaeus at Silver Creek, with Father Kasper Ostlangenberg as pastor; who, however, is also in charge of St. Boniface, at Shoal Creek. St. Liborius Congregation at Fayetteville is attended by the newly ordained Father Henry Fortmann. No reports of these places were given at the Synod, probably because they were but recently established. But Father Charles Meyer of St. Andrews at Teutonia reports a membership of 800, with 47 Baptisms; 8 Marriages; one Convert, and 9 Funerals. Fathers Ostlangenberg, Meyer and Fortmann usually preached in German to their almost exclusively German Congregations. The County of Monroe, separating St. Clair from Randolph County, had as yet but one church with resident priest, St. Augustines, at Prairie du Long. It had for its

pastor the Rev. John Kenny. Its membership was only 160 souls, with 20 Baptisms; and 8 Converts. Hence Father Kenny had ample time to attend to the spiritual wants of the neighboring Congregations in Randolph and St. Clair Counties, as St. Patrick's at O'Hara Settlement, and S. S. Philip and James at Harrisonville. St. Patrick's Congregation numbered 229 souls. St. Thomas' Church at Johnson Settlement in St. Clair County was also attended by Father Kenny. The old Parish of St. Joseph's, Prairie du Rocher, had a church of wood. The congregation numbered 497. There were 25 Baptisms; 5 Marriages; 4 Converts, and 19 Funerals. Father Vital Van Clostere was the pastor.

Father Benedict Roux, the founder of the Church in Kansas City was now chaplain of the Convent of the Visitation at Kaskaskia, whilst Father T. Conway served as pastor of the ancient parish of the Immaculate Conception. Though sadly fallen from its former grandeur, Kaskaskia still had a membership of 815 souls. But the Indians were all gone, and the Church built by the Jesuits had fallen in ruins. A small chapel of wood served as a temporary house of God. The convent of the Visitandines also had a chapel. The number of Baptisms was 61, of Marriages, 22, Converts 4 and Funerals 19. Cairo, the southernmost point of Illinois, had no church as yet, but was regularly visited by Father M. Collins, C. M. from Cape Girardeau. There were then 300 Catholics in Cairo and vicinity. North and northeast of the episcopal city was the Congregation of St. Matthew, at Alton, without church and priest, but attended by Father Jodocus Van Assche, S. J. from Portage des Sioux: Father George Hamilton had been lately sent to Springfield in Sangamon County to found a parish. The Congregation had St. John the Evangelist as its patron saint. Towards the end of the year it was to be added to the circuit of missions centering around La Salle, of which the Lazarist Fathers Blasius Raho, Aloysius Parodi and Eudaldo Estany had charge.

The Congregation of the Holy Cross at La Salle and of the Holy Trinity at Ottawa had churches of wood, and numbered 860 and 450 souls. There were in all the missions 90 Baptisms; 6 Marriages; 4 Converts and 33 Funerals. The remaining missions of La Salle were: The Annunciation at Virginia, St. Philomena's, at Peoria, St. Patrick's at Black Partridge and St. Lawrence at Pekin. Quincy in Adams County, in addition to the Church of the Ascension for the German Catholics, under the pastorate of Father A. F. Brickwedde, was to have one also for the English-speaking Catholics under the title of St. Lawrence, founded and administered by Father Hilary Tucker. The Germans numbered 152 souls and the Americans 385. Father Brickwedde was prevented by a mishap on the river from attending

the Synod. The boat ran on a sand bar and could not be cleared in time for the journey. Father Tucker was, at the time, only planning his future successes in Quincy, but by the end of the year his church of St. Lawrence was under roof. Good Father Saint Cyr, the founder of the Church in Chicago, had been transferred to Fountain Green in Hancock County, where he built the Church of St. Simon. The Congregation numbered 420 souls, scattered over a wide territory: the church-building was of wood. There were 6 Baptisms and 6 Marriages. Before the end of the year 1839, Father St. Cyr was transferred to Kaskaskia, and Father Timothy Conway succeeded him at Fountain Green. St. Augustine's Church in Fulton County was a mission of Fountain Green, both together having a membership of 420 souls. The following stations were visited in Illinois:

*From La Salle:* 1. Beardstown, 2. Jacksonville, 3. Shelbyville, 4. Marseilles.

*From Cahokia:* 1. Le Cantine, 2. Edwardsville.

*From Prairie du Long:* 1. New Deseign, 2. James Mills.

*From Fountain Green:* 1. Commerce, 2. The Rapids, 3. Warsaw.

*From Shoal Creek:* 1. Belleville, 2. St. Thadaeus.

There remains now the State of Arkansas with its two Churches: St. Denis at the Poste of Arkansas, under Father Simon Augustus Paris, and St. Mary's in New Gascony with Father J. Richard Bole as pastor. Both churches were of wood. The number of souls is not given. Little Rock and Napoleonville are mentioned as stations. In the Indian Territory the Jesuit Fathers have established two missions: the Potawatomi Mission, under the Fathers Peter De Smet, Felix Verreydt and Anthony Eysvogels, and the Kickapoo Mission under the Fathers Christian Hoëcken and Herman Aelen. The missionaries also attended the white settlements. 1. Westport (Kansas City) 2. Independence, 3. Liberty, 4. Clay County, in Missouri, and Leavenworth, Kansas.

According to these reports the Catholic population of the entire diocese in 1838 did not exceed 37,000 souls: yet, as immigration was then pouring a constant stream of families from Ireland and Catholic portions of Germany into the country, the official count could not be even approximately correct. Bishop Rosati's estimate in his report to Rome is 70,000. This estimate may appear excessive, yet it is certainly nearer to the truth than the reported 37,000. There were forty-seven churches with resident priests, five without a priest, and five chapels. The stations visited were sixty in number. The clergy consisted of one Bishop, thirty-one secular priests, twenty-two Lazarists, twenty-seven Jesuits, making a grand total of eighty. The three convents of the Sacred Heart numbered forty-two sisters. The Orphan Asylum and

Hospital were served by nineteen Sisters of Charity. The four Convents of the Loretto Sisters contained thirty members; the two Convents of the Sisters of St. Joseph eleven; and the Convent of the Visitation Nuns nineteen, making a total of one hundred and twenty Sisters.

It was with heartfelt gratitude to God and the deepest regard for His devoted and self sacrificing co-laborers that Bishop Rosati summed up the result so far attained:

“Thus far,” said he in his Pastoral letter, “the Providence of our Heavenly Father has watched over our Diocese with a special care—a care that claims our warmest thanks; for to Him we justly attribute, as to their fountain, all the blessings which we so copiously enjoy. Many of you, dearly beloved Brethren, recollect the doleful state in which this portion of the flock of Christ was involved twenty years ago, when we arrived here. There were then but four priests in what was then called Upper Louisiana, and they attended, occasionally, eight parishes. There existed not a single literary institution of any respectability for the education of the youth of either sex, and in consequence of the scarcity of Missioners, the comforts and the helps of Religion could only be rarely administered to the people. This picture, which is but a faithful representation of the state of things at that period, was truly alarming; but how greatly the scene is changed for the better! Our Diocese now possesses the priests of the Congregation of the Mission; and to their early exertions we are indebted for the establishment of a theological Seminary and of a prosperous College, the erection of several churches, and a great increase of piety among the Catholics of the vast district entrusted to their spiritual care; they, too, have been the instruments, given us by Providence, for effecting the return of many of our dissenting brethren to the flock of the Supreme Pastor of souls. The sons of St. Ignatius of Loyola soon came to our assistance, and to them we owe, under God the formation of another flourishing literary institution, the creation of a Noviate, the building of several churches and a copious harvest in the Lord’s vineyard.

In many of the congregations, Day Schools have been established for the instruction of male children, and most of them are in a thriving condition. The remaining clergy of our Diocese, who are not connected with either of these religious bodies, have been equally active in their exertions for the propagation of our holy Religion. To them, also, we owe a number of sacred edifices and establishments;—they have, also exercised a powerful influence over the religious and moral improvement of our flock. Nor have the faithful been wanting in their duty: they have nobly come forward to second the zeal, and to emulate the example of their Pastors. New churches and new establishments are daily called for; and we have the confidence, that He, who has begun his good work

in you, and through you, will also perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil. i. 6.)

Nor has Providence been wanting to the female sex: the Ladies of the Sacred Heart were the first that volunteered their services for the advancement of female education. They have successively formed three establishments for boarders, two for orphans, and three for day-scholars. In process of time, Heaven increased the numbers of laborers. The Sisters of Charity came and took charge of an extensive Hospital and an Asylum for Orphan Boys;—their eulogy is stamped upon the hearts of the suffering and distressed, whom they have relieved and befriended. The Sisters of Loretto superintend four literary establishments, and generously contribute their mite to the advancement of knowledge and virtue.

The Sisters of the Visitation preside over a literary institution, inferior in merit and usefulness to none in the Diocese; and recently, the Sisters of St. Joseph, having come to give additional energy to the work so heroically commenced and so steadily pursued, by the above-named Communities, have formed three establishments of learning, one of which is exclusively devoted to the instruction of the deaf and dumb of their sex.

If to the above details we add, dearly beloved brethren, the consideration, that our Diocese has even sent colonies of clerical professors and religious mistresses to other parts of the United States, that nine Missioners are already employed in the civilization and conversion of the savage nations; that they have formed three stations among them, with a success equal to their indefatigable zeal; that even the most recent of these stations, commenced but a year ago, counts already, about two hundred converts—fifty of whom were lately admitted to their first communion—we shall have laid before you, in our humble opinion, abundant proof of the great change which the Lord has produced in our Diocese and we doubt not but that you will give full vent to the emotions of love and gratitude towards the Author of so many inestimable favors. Did we consider them as the effects of our own industry, we surely would have passed them over in silence—for it would ill become us to speak in our own commendation. If we have expiated on them, we have done so in conformity with the sentiment expressed by holy Tobias: It is good to hide the secrets of a king; but honorable to reveal the works of God.”<sup>2</sup>

The forces marshalled under Bishop Rosati now having passed in review we turn to *The Acts and Decrees of the synod.*

---

<sup>2</sup> Pastoral letter of Joseph Rosati, Bishop of St. Louis, to the Clergy and the Laity of the Diocese.

The first business of the Synod was the promulgation of the decrees of the First Provincial Council of Baltimore. This Council was held under Archbishop James Whitefield in 1839, and was attended by the Bishops of Bardstown, Charleston, Cincinnati, Boston and the Administrator of Philadelphia.

The Bishop of St. Louis, though not a suffragan of the Province of Baltimore, was also invited to attend, as residing under the American government, Bishop Rosati accepted the gracious invitation and took a leading part in the deliberations. The decrees of the Council were duly examined in Rome, and with a few corrections, approved by the Sovereign Pontiff, after the unanimous vote of the Cardinals of Propaganda. The publication of the decrees was unavoidably delayed until the autumn of 1831. On publication they became the law of the Church in the United States.

Two other Provincial Councils had been held up to the time of the Synod; but only the First required special attention.

The Second Provincial Council, held in 1833, did not concern itself with any other matter than the delimitation of the various dioceses of the Province of which St. Louis had by that time become a suffragan see.<sup>3</sup>

The Third Provincial Council was convened by Archbishop Samuel Eccleston in April 1837. Ten prelates were in attendance, among them Bishop Rosati. Among the Agenda as proposed by the Archbishop of Baltimore, No. 3. reads as follows:

“The necessity and mode of enforcing the Decrees of the First Provincial Council.” Now, it does not appear from the official report of the Council’s proceedings that anything was done in the matter, yet it cannot be doubted that the prelates discussed the subject. That a diocesan Synod was the best mode of promulgating and enforcing the decrees of the Council of Baltimore, as sanctioned by the Holy See, was very plain especially in the eyes of a man and bishop, so intent upon “sentire cum ecclesia,” as Bishop Rosati was. The reasons he did not convoke a Synod at an earlier period can be gathered from the circumstances of his diocese, its vast extent, and the small number of priests available. But now the time seemed propitious for special legislation in explanation and support of the Decrees of the First Provincial Council of Baltimore. “We had, previously to the Synod, maturely considered the means best calculated to promote ecclesiastical discipline, the reverence due to the divine worship, and the general advancement of piety in our diocese,” writes the Bishop, “To attain these several ends we

---

<sup>3</sup> The various Provincial Councils of Baltimore can be found in the “*Collectio Lacensis*,” vol. III.

have made a series of statutes, which we promulgated during the Synod."

On the opening day of the Synod "all the decrees of the First Provincial Council of Baltimore were promulgated," as the official report says, "then the Statutes of the Diocesan Synod were read." On the following Sunday after Solemn High-Mass celebrated by Father Francis X. Dahmen, C. M. the names of those were announced whom the Bishop had chosen to share with him in the administration of the diocese:

Vicar General: Very Rev. John Timon, C. M.

Pro-Vicar General: Rev. John Marie Odin, C. M.

Episcopal Consultors: Very Rev. John Timon, C. M.

Rev. John Marie Odin, C. M.

Very Rev. Peter Verhaegen, S. J.

Rev. John Elet, S. J.

Rev. Joseph Anthony Lutz

Rev. Francis Cellini

Rev. James Fontbonne

Rev. Regis Loisel

Episcopal Secretary: Joseph Anthony Lutz

Examiners of the Clergy: Very Rev. John Timon, C. M.

Rev. John Marie Odin, C. M.

Very Rev. Peter Verhaegen, S. J.

Rev. John Elet, S. J.

Rev. John Tornatore, C. M.

Rev. James Fontbonne

The Statutes enacted by the St. Louis Synod of 1839 have remained, throughout the vicissitudes of a century, the law of the diocese, thus showing that the spirit animating the law-giver, was the spirit of the Church. In a few particulars, however, a change became necessary, owing to the changes introduced by the New Code of Canon Law. These changes are modifications, rather, of the Synodal legislation of Bishop Rosati, than abrogations. So the Clause: "we very much *desire* that a lamp be kept constantly burning before the altar, at which the Most Holy Sacrament is preserved." Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament Feasts of the first class. According to No. XIV, the Decree of the was permitted only after the Mass, or the Vespers on Sundays and Council of Trent, "*Tametsi*," was declared in force in the entire diocese and not merely in the old French and Spanish parishes, but the Declaration of Benedict XIV, was extended to all the parts of the former diocese of Upper and Lower Louisiana and the Floridas. No church should be built without the permission of the Bishop in writing.

All priests having the care of souls must say Mass every Sunday and Holy day of obligation. Only four Feast days of obligation were retained: the Ascension, the Assumption, All Saints and the Nativity of Our Lord. The Institute of Lay Catechists is recommended very strongly. A proper support for the Seminary as well as for the clergy in general is enjoined upon the faithful. Every church must have a confessional and a baptismal font.<sup>4</sup>

The Statutes are composed in a clear, concise idiomatic Latin, and show the Bishop's fine sense of the dignity of the priesthood, as well as of the requirements of the sacred offices each priest is called upon to perform.

---

<sup>4</sup> Synodus Prima Sti. Ludovici 1839.

## ALONG SANGAMON RIVER AND CROOKED CREEK

The priests chosen by Bishop Rosati to continue the work begun by Fathers Lefevere and Saint Cyr in the heart of the Illinois country were the two Missourians that enjoyed the privilege, as the advance guard of a multitude of others, to receive their theological training in the Eternal City: George Alexander Hamilton and Hilary Tucker, 1831-1838. Father George A. Hamilton was born in Marion County, Kentucky, and came to Perry County about 1825. He entered the Seminary of St. Mary's, accompanied Hilary Tucker to Rome, was attacked by the smallpox which put him back in his studies, so that he could not be ordained at the time of his companion's ordination, returned with Father Tucker in 1838, and was immediately sent to the missions in Springfield and Sangamon County, Illinois. There is a large collection of letters from Rome written by these young propaganda students to their beloved Bishop and friend Rosati. These letters are, of course, of no great historical value, but what must strike every reader as something singular is the easy familiarity of these young men in their intercourse with a man of the highest station and influence in the Church.

On Christmas Day 1833, young Hamilton writes to Bishop Rosati:

"When I consider the extreme necessity in our Diocese of zealous priests, I long to be ready to carry the word of life to those desolate people who still walk in darkness and in the shadow of death; but again when I consider my extreme want of the virtues and learning requisite to the due fulfilment of so sublime a ministry, my heart shrinks in dismay from the arduous undertaking. And with this thought always before me, I should be induced to abandon the hope of even doing any good, were I not assured by the Eternal Truth Himself that He does not choose the great and learned of this world for His Apostles, but the lowly and ignorant, to confound the pride and vain knowledge of the worldly-wise. Confiding entirely in the promises of Eternal Truth, I am again assured that, if I use my best exertions to fit myself well for the offices to which I am destined, though of myself I can do nothing, Almighty God will supply from His inexhaustible treasures every deficiency. I must then endeavor to prepare myself for the sublime dignity to which I hope one day to be raised; and nowhere could I better do it than in the college where I now am."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese. Published under the title, "First Natives of Missouri to go to Rome for Studies and to be Ordained There," in "Church Progress," December 1918, ss.

The deep interest George Hamilton felt in all things that concerned Bishop Rosati, as well as the great desire of the zealous prelate himself to obtain German priests for the numerous German settlements rising as if by magic in every part of his extensive diocese, especially Illinois and Northern Missouri, gives more than a passing interest to a passage from a letter of George Hamilton dated Mont Alto, Near Frascati, September 28, 1836:

"I had hoped you would be assisted very soon by a young student of this college, who had expressed a determination to go to St. Louis; he would have been of great service among the Germans. But the Secretary has thought fit to send him to Calcutta. There is a young gentleman in the Greek College in Rome, who has expressed a strong desire to consecrate himself to the American Missions. He is determined, if possible, to go to America. He is not of the Greek rite. His superiors seem favorable to his inclination, as he is a young man of great abilities, and likely to do a great deal of good, and as they see, he is not likely to do much at home, on account of the oppressive laws which clog the zeal of the missionary. He has already acquired a pretty competent knowledge of the English language, which he begins to speak with fluency; he also understands French. He is a very accomplished Greek and Latin scholar. His health and strength, and above all, his zeal, admirably fit him for the American missions. He has often expressed to me an ardent wish to go to St. Louis. He would, under many respects, be a very valuable acquisition to the diocese. With one word, I am persuaded, you can prevail on Mgr. Mai to send him to St. Louis. You will not, I know, let slip so favorable an opportunity to enrich your diocese with such a learned and valuable missionary. He had wished to disclose his designs to other Americans who would immediately have written on to their Bishops to ask him; but I prevailed on him to wait till I got an answer from you. It is seldom, Sir, that you or any other Bishop can have so advantageous an offer. As you are coming to Rome next year, you will, I hope, secure the services of this young gentleman, or if Providence so dispose it that you cannot come, you can write to the Prefect of Propaganda to send him. He will have completed Theology with me. His name is Nicholas Perpignan."<sup>2</sup>

In another letter student George gives his views on a topic that was then as now, a burning one, the practice of begging in foreign countries:

"I must tell you that I am no friend to such begging, although I wish well to Mr. Odin, and I should show great ingratitude were I to act otherwise. Still I maintain that it does not look well here

---

<sup>2</sup> "First Natives of Missouri," *l.c.*

to see a priest of our missions making such collections. I have heard many, and very respectable persons, too, say that there appears to be too great a solicitude, or rather too much confidence placed in human means. For, say they, if it be for the honor and glory of God, God will find means to carry into execution what is for His greater glory. Be that as it may, I am of the opinion that too much begging does not suit well for a priest of our missions, and I think I could do as much without coming to Europe. For I think it is only underestimating our people to expect to be supported by the contributions made by the faithful of foreign countries. No, I say the faithful of our country are far more able to support their clergy, than those of Europe are to support their own, and we only need to take them in the right way to succeed."<sup>3</sup> Then, turning to the necessity of a native clergy he writes:

"I am very sorry to learn that no natives of the country seem disposed to embrace the ecclesiastical state, for I am convinced of the necessity of a national clergy. The reasons are obvious and need no elucidation, but in a country like ours, I fear it will be long before a clergy can be had, for there are so many employments open to the youth that few think of the priesthood. Nevertheless, I hope with the help of God's grace, we shall yet have a flourishing clergy before many years."

The peaceful happy days of George Hamilton's stay in Rome came to an end in 1837. Arriving in New York on the 24th of September, 1838, both Hilary and George, as Bishop Rosati affectionately called our noble pair of Roman students, slowly travelled to St. Louis, where on their arrival in November, they received their faculties and were sent to the missions, Hilary Tucker to Quincy, George Hamilton to Springfield and the Sangamon Country.

But alas, Father Hamilton's first letter from Springfield is a sad commentary on his lighthearted hopes. He would borrow money for his church, because he failed "to take his people in the right way" to "succeed" in raising the necessary funds among them. Indeed, good Bishop Odin was wiser, as he well might be, than the young student, in placing the faculty of begging above the helplessness of borrowing. Interest was exorbitant in those early days of Illinois, fluctuating between 12 to 25 percent, according to the needs of the borrower. Father Hamilton, however, was not disposed to wait for something to turn up. The calls of his mission fully occupied his time. The country was growing rapidly. Again we meet the old saying: "All we require to attract Catholic immigration is a church." But let us see what Father Hamilton has to say on the subject:

---

3 Hamilton to Rosati, Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

"I would request you to let me know whether I can borrow one or two thousand dollars, and upon what terms, in St. Louis. For as I am compelled to borrow, I desire to make my bargain to the best advantage. Here I cannot think of borrowing money, the interest is so exorbitant. The least they think of asking is 12 percent. Will you please write me immediately upon what terms I can expect to get the desired loan."<sup>4</sup>

Father Hamilton's report on the prospects of his missionary field is encouraging: "I have just returned from an excursion in the country, where I have been pretty successful in finding out new Catholics. I discovered a new settlement of Irish Catholics near Mount Sterling, Brown County, Illinois. There are six families already there, and twelve or fourteen others have entered land in that neighborhood and are expected this Fall and next Spring. There is a fair prospect of there being a large congregation in a few years in and about Mount Sterling. The distance thence to Springfield is about 60 miles and to Quincy about 45 or 50. Several others about Jacksonville, New Lexington and Virginia have made themselves known. They are rapidly increasing in Springfield. When I first arrived here, there were only five families known to be Catholics, besides seven or eight single individuals. Now there are thirteen or fourteen families, besides forty to forty-five single persons residing in town. I doubt not that Catholicity will rapidly increase in this part of the country. All we require to attract Catholic immigration is a church. We have been greatly disappointed in getting the lot. Persons owning property in that quarter of town were anxious we should get that lot which was better situated than any other for a church, and the owner was willing to let us have it, but he wanted to speculate and asked an enormous price. We declined, and he came down a little in his demands. He offered it for \$300.00. We accepted it and requested a deed and, if he could not give that, a bond to make a deed when he should get out an order of court to sell the property (it being the property of minors), binding himself to secure us against any damage we might sustain in case he failed to make the deed by the 1st of January, 1840. When he saw the condition, he hesitated, consulted for days, shuffled and finally backed out. And now, after causing us to lose so much time, we are compelled to seek somewhere else for a suitable lot. I hope, however, we shall be able to commence this work. We have partly engaged with a gentleman, who will not, it is thought, deceive us, for two lots 53½ by 157, in a very eligible situation in the town. If you could make it convenient to lay the cornerstone, I should be happy to wait. Please let me know as soon as possible."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Hamilton to Rosati, from Springfield, July 7, 1839, in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

Bishop Rosati was a great borrower himself for church purposes and very probably knew no advantageous opening for Father Hamilton. But he returns to the charge: "I deem it my duty to apprise you of everything I do here. I have used every effort in my power to build a church this season in Springfield, but all my efforts have failed of success. I had indeed obtained subscriptions to the amount of \$2000 or \$2,300, and this created a hope of being able to proceed immediately with the building: But, Sir, I perceive, there is a wide difference between subscribing one's name for money and paying down the money. About the time we wished to commence, hard times began, and many subscribers felt it inconvenient to pay and, as they were not Catholics, we did not like to urge the matter on them. Many of the Catholics paid their subscriptions, and if we had pressed them, would have paid up everything, but when we saw we could not get money from our other subscribers, we told them not to put themselves to any inconvenience for the present. I think, however, there is no danger of not getting the amount subscribed this Fall and next Winter. And in consideration of this, I determined to effect a loan, if I could get it on fair and reasonable terms. The exorbitant interest required here deterred me from borrowing and, in the hope of getting it on more advantageous terms, brought me to St. Louis. But my inquiries soon satisfied me of my mistake. So I resolved to return to Springfield and wait till I could procure from some source or other the means to build my church. In the meantime I have tried to obtain a room which might be set apart for the purpose of Divine Worship, but as yet I have been unable to find one large enough, every room more than ten feet square being occupied, except one which was built for a theater and which will again probably be applied to the same cause. I have refused to take it, thinking that is was not becoming for a house, that has once been appropriated to Divine Worship, to be turned into a theater. I know not whether I shall be able to get a room this season or not."<sup>6</sup>

"As I am situated, I assure you, I feel very uncomfortable, being compelled to celebrate Mass in a private house and perform all my functions exposed to the danger of being interrupted by every one who may wish to come into the room. I have not even a private apartment where I can hear confessions, My situation is so unpleasant that, if it were not for the kindness of the family I live with, I could not reconcile myself to remain. The family talks of moving, and if they do, "*actum est de me*," I am undone. For it will be utterly impossible for me, with my present salary, to pay my board at any house in town, and there is no other Catholic family in town. There

---

<sup>6</sup> Hamilton to Rosati, from Springfield, August 17, 1839.

are, to be sure, several Catholic ladies, but their husbands are Protestants and I could not expect to board at their houses without paying the usual fare.”<sup>7</sup>

“Owing to the scattered condition of the Catholics in this section of country I am compelled to be always on the move, in order to visit them once or twice a year. I most always find some, that I never heard of before. My opinion is that, instead of one, there ought to be two priests here in order properly to attend the Catholics and to enable themselves to derive advantage from their own labors. A priest wandering over these woods without ever seeing another priest, with whom he may advise and to whom he may unbosom his thoughts, is very apt to grow cold. If there were two, it might render their situation somewhat more pleasant. But these Catholics are too few and generally too poor to afford a competent support even to one clergyman and, I am persuaded, I could not live here, were it not for the good family I reside with.

“It will require, in my opinion, a Society of men, who have funds of their own to start with, to effect a permanent and extensively useful establishment: once that is done everything will go on prosperously.

“I informed you in my last letter of a new Catholic settlement I had discovered north of the Illinois River. I have been told since that there are several Catholic families south of the Meredosia. These I have never visited nor do I know how many there are. There are some too about Vandalia, and south of that. I intended to visit them next month; I thought I would take them in on my way home, whither I have to go in order to settle my affairs, which if I do not then, I might not be able to do for a year, as some of those, who owe me, are going down the river, and may not return for twelve or eighteen months. I request your permission to do it.”<sup>8</sup>

The hint as to a Society of men who have funds of their own to start with, was perhaps suggested by the establishment of the La Salle Mission under the Vincentian Fathers Raho and Parodi, an undertaking that certainly did wonders in Central Illinois. But we will turn from speculations to facts, pleasant and unpleasant, as contained in Father Hamilton’s supplement to his report for 1839:

“As I have been unavoidably compelled to omit many things in the printed account relating to this mission, I herewith transmit them to you. There are in this mission, as you may see by reference to the printed account 15 stations of which I consider Springfield as the center. They lie at every point of the compass from twelve to sixty miles from Springfield. A brief description of each one I here subjoin. Sugar Creek, a small settlement 12 miles south of Spring-

---

<sup>7</sup> Hamilton to Rosati, Archives.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, ibidem.

field, in Sangamon County, comprising 8 families, averaging 7 members or 56 (souls) in all. Bear Creek, a large settlement 35 miles southeast of Springfield in Macon County containing 23 families averaging 6, or 136 (souls). Flat Branch, Macon County, 40 miles east of Springfield, 3 families, averaging about 7, or 21 (souls). Shelbyville, seat of justice of Shelby County, 56 miles a little south of east of Springfield, containing 6 families. It has been nearly a year since I visited them. Lick Creek, 16 miles southwest of Springfield, counting but one family. Jacksonville, 35 miles west of Springfield, has but one resident Catholic, though there are several transient ones laboring there. Jersey Prairie, northwest corner of Morgan County, 3 Catholic families, 34 miles from Springfield, Virginia, Cass County, 3 or 4 families comprising about 10 (souls), 34 miles north of west of Springfield, Meredosia, Morgan County 55 miles from Springfield, some few transient Catholics. Naples, Scott County, 58 miles west of Springfield, one or two families, never been visited. Exeter, Scott County, 51 miles northwest of Springfield, several resident Catholic families, others about to settle. Sterling, 70 miles northwest of Springfield, seat of justice of Brown County, a new and numerous settlement of Irish Catholics. Petersburg, Menard County, 24 miles northwest of Springfield, Logan County, 3 Catholic families.

“This Sir, is a description as accurate as my recollection, unaided by a map, will permit me to give you of the missionary stations I have to visit. Their great distance from each other will, as you easily perceive, preclude the possibility of my frequently visiting them. I have, however, visited them all with the exception of 3, twice since my mission to Springfield. I have already spoken to you about my prospects of a church here. They are daily growing more gloomy and hopeless. One more effort I will make to erect a small church. If this should fail, the failure will lead me to believe, that I have anticipated the will and good pleasure of Divine Providence in endeavoring to build, at so early a day, a church in the Capital of Illinois.”<sup>9</sup>

The note of discouragement struck in this letter is continued in the next:

“I have now been in the mission for one year. When I arrived, there was, I believed, a fairer prospect of erecting a church than there is at present. Whether the failure proceeds from my inability or mismanagement, from coolness of zeal on the part of subscribers, or from the pressure of the times, I am unable to ascertain. Sir, I believe, I have done all that I could to effect the erection of a church. I have traversed large portions of the state, begging at every house

---

<sup>9</sup> Hamilton to Rosati, Springfield, December 29, 1829.

where I thought there was a hope of obtaining assistance, and preaching in every congregation for the same purpose, and I have failed. I have reflected much upon the subject, and I have come to the conclusion, that it is useless for me to try to build a church with the means I can at present command. The Catholics are, as I said before, too few and too poor to build one themselves, and their numbers do not seem to augment. There are nine entire Catholic families, and two of which the females are Catholics, in town. There are other transient families, that remain here while they can obtain employment. In these circumstances, Sir, I confess I am at a loss how to proceed."<sup>10</sup>

On April 18, 1840, Bishop Rosati appointed Rev. George A. Hamilton pastor of Alton, remarking in his letter of appointment that the missions of Springfield will be visited by the Rev. Raho and assistant.

Alton, divided into Upper and Lower Alton, had no church as yet; but the mission was dedicated to St. Matthew the Apostle.

Among the pioneer settlers of Alton on the Mississippi there were but few Catholics. Yet one by one, Irish and German families had built their homes on the hills, the site of the present city. They were visited at regular intervals from Portage des Sioux beyond the river by the Jesuit Fathers, Peter Kenny and Jodocus Van Asche. The report for 1836, gives Alton 150 souls and the neighboring village of Grafton 15. At Bishop Rosati's suggestion two Irish Catholics, J. P. B. McCabe and Richard McDonnell, made the first church census, and on June 26, 1836, sent the list to St. Louis with the request for a resident priest.<sup>11</sup>

"The people received us very kindly and rejoiced at the prospect of having this means afforded them of attending to their religious duties and bringing up their children in the faith of their Fathers. One German farmer, a Mr. Scharf, escorted us to the dwellings of five or six of his neighbors, and then we were joined by two young men, who with pleasure conducted us to Upper Alton, calling at every house where they knew a member of the church could be found.

"At Upper Alton I met with a Frenchman (Mr. Fecht) who put me in possession of a subscription list, which contained the names of nine individuals, with the sum of \$71.00. Among the many promises of aid which I have received here is Mr. Lane's of a lot in any part of his property in Lower Alton and the sum of \$500.00. Col. Snowden, who resides on the prairie a few miles from town, has, I understand, stated he will give \$500.00. I have seen two Irish Protestants here, men of property, who signified their intention of subscribing liberally towards the building. I fear that the want of a pastor has been the

<sup>10</sup> Hamilton to Rosati, Springfield, September 10, 1840.

<sup>11</sup> The Original of Census in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese. Printed in "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, pp. 300 and 301.

means of making some of the weak-minded or uneducated to join the sectarians, or become quite indifferent about religion in any shape.

"I am informed that several respectable families, who emigrated this season with the intention of settling in this neighborhood, declined doing so upon learning that there was no church nor priest here. I have no doubt that with the blessing of God, I shall see a substantial edifice erected in Lower Alton and attended by a congregation of 500 to 600 before two years have elapsed. If the bishop will send a priest here I am instructed by the Catholic inhabitants to give them notice so that a meeting may take place to make arrangements for having the lot laid out and the foundation sunk, and the building commenced. Stone is plentiful here, and a Dutchman in Upper Alton holds out a promise of a donation of the brick. I trust I shall have the pleasure of drawing the deed."<sup>12</sup>

Bishop Rosati gladly acquiesced and on February 1837, appointed the Rev. James O'Flynn from the Archdiocese of Tuam as Alton's first resident pastor. But Father O'Flynn soon found himself at odds with a substantial part of his congregation and, on February 25, 1838, asked for his recall. Among the reasons for this resolve, this seems to have been the main one: "The Germans are more numerous here than the Catholics from any other country. They are complaining that they derive no benefit from my instruction and consequently are not very willing to contribute to my support, except three or four families in the country and about the same number in Upper Alton, who have attended Mass very regularly."<sup>13</sup>

Father O' Flynn left Alton and the diocese soon after this. The Jesuit Father Van Asche once more took charge of the place until the arrival of Father George A. Hamilton from Springfield, April 1840.

What the new pastor accomplished in the brief period of his stay in Alton, we have no way of learning to tell. On February 20, 1842, the Coadjutor Bishop, Peter Richard Kenrick transferred him from Alton to the St. Louis Cathedral, when his power of preaching in fluent and idiomatic English was appreciated by Bishop and people.

In 1846, his name is mentioned for the last time in the records of St. Louis diocese as assistant rector at St. Patrick's Church in St. Louis, with Rev. W. Wheeler as rector. When and why Father Hamilton left his native diocese we cannot say, but in 1865, we find him as pastor of St. Francis De Sales' parish in Charlestown, Mass., and as a member of the Bishop's Council in the Diocese of Boston. His death occurred on July 21, 1874, in Charlestown, Mass.<sup>14</sup>

In order to round out the account of Father Lefevere's Illinois missions, a few words must here be inserted concerning Fountain

12 O'Flynn to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

13 Idem, *ibidem*.

14 Church Directory.

Green and its first pastor, John M. F. Saint Cyr. After serving the Church of Chicago until March 1837, Father Saint Cyr was appointed to take charge of the Congregation at Quincy. But, owing to Father Brickwedde's opportune arrival and consequent appointment to Quincy, Father Saint Cyr's destination was changed to the pastorship of St. Simon's on Crooked Creek, Hancock County, Illinois. Fountain Green was the poetic name of a rather poor and lonely inland village, just emerging from the state of pure nature. It is from this place that Bishop Rosati on March 4, 1838, received the following plaintive message:

"When I left St. Louis in November last, I was very unwell, and I have been so ever since. However, I tried to visit several of my congregations before the cold weather set in, which I did, as I had promised. I rode there, I went, I came back and fell; when I shall rise again, I do not know. Since the 28th of January, I did not leave my bed. I have almost lost the use of my right leg by pains, first in the hip, then between the knee and the ankle, in which they are now most horribly felt, which rendered me incapable of setting out and doing anything. A hundred things have been applied to it; but nothing seems to do me any good. I leave it to the hand of God to chastise me as long as He pleases, *Modo aeternum parcat*, or to His holy will to cure me; *in patientia possidebitis animas vestras*"

"... The church building in Fountain Green is going on very slowly on account of the weather. Mr. Henry Riley, who contracted for the building, is to go down to St. Louis at the opening of the river to buy different things for the church. If it should be then in your power to pay him what you promised to give towards St. Simon's Church, I would be very thankful to you."<sup>15</sup>

Within three weeks another letter was sent with the same complaint of bodily ailments, but showing a little more hope:

"I wrote to you some time ago a letter in which I informed you of my bad situation, not being able to walk at all. Well I am still in the same situation, with that difference, however, that, the weather being warmer, I can step out of my room with the help of two sticks. But the pains keep me on the same train, and many a time worse in the cold weather. We did all we could, but nothing had done me any good. Wherefore, Reverend Bishop, if by next week I feel no better or perceive no mending, I will venture myself on a horse or wagon to cross that long, long prairie. But whether I will be able to do it is a matter of doubt. However, I will try my best; so that if you do not see me in St. Louis before long, you may conclude that I got better or worse."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Saint Cyr to Rosati, March 4, 1838, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>16</sup> Saint Cyr to Rosati, March 30, 1838, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

As the summer came on the bodily troubles of the missionary must have been relieved considerably, as we find him on a still hunt for souls in the various counties of his vast parish. It seems to have been his farewell visit. It may strike many as singular to note the importance attached by these pioneers of the faith to any church or chapel, however poor and homely, as a means of developing the country round about, yet they had the experience. The little church becomes the center to which all the roads converge, since its presence in the locality is the means of determining the Catholic people to settle in the neighborhood. And what a fine instinctive feeling these pioneers had in discovering the signs of coming greater things. In illustration of this let us proceed to Father St. Cyr's last letter from the missions in McDonough, Fulton, Peoria and Tazewell Counties:

"I have fulfilled my promise concerning my going on a mission to Peoria. I also visited the Catholics in Tazewell County. They are very numerous, some Americans, some French, German and Irish. The 15th of July I said Mass at Mr. Tucker's (Tazewell). Mr. Menard and his wife attended. And I baptized several children. The week after, I visited likewise several wealthy Irish families in Lotall Prairie, forty miles from Peru (Peoria County). Amongst which families is Mr. Mooney, a rich and zealous Catholic; all from the city of New York. A great many more families would have come to this part of the country, they told me, had it not been for the scarcity of money. Many again have been prevented from moving for not hearing of any Catholic church being established, or of any prospect of establishing one. Let therefore a Catholic church be established with a priest stationed at Peoria, and the Catholics will flock into that part of the country.

"Peoria is already and will be more so, one of the most important points on the Illinois River for Catholicity, if nothing be neglected on our part. It is therefore high time to take the matter into consideration; it is now the very season to plant."<sup>17</sup>

"It has not been in my power to do anything respecting the church and the lot that had been promised. Being a perfect stranger to the Catholics, they not having received the letter you promised me to write to them as an introduction, and myself not having the list of the Catholics which Mr. Timon made. Mr. Peter Menard, who alone could give me all the information I wanted, was not then in Peoria; he has moved on his farm with his family, 12 miles south of Peoria (Tazewell County). However I requested Mr. Mooney, zealous member of our church and a great friend to that Mr. Nolone (Nolan) who promised Mr. Timon to give a lot for the church, and who since retracted, that, in case he would make his first words good, to have the lot deeded. So far the whole matter is hanging on promises. I found in Peoria and its environs 30 Catholic Families, whose names I took on a

---

17 Saint Cyr to Rosati, August 6, 1838.

list; there are some more but I could not see them for want of time. I promised to visit them again in October if nothing should prevent me; this will be the last time, for I do not propose to visit them any more, as my health does not permit me to undertake such long trips, and my finances are not much better. I hope you will send them a priest, but a priest who must speak French, English and German; that he be able to speak French and English is absolutely necessary.

"I expect to start Thursday for Quincy, thence to Commerce, then home again. I am very sorry, Very Reverend Bishop, not to be able to comply with the great obligations which charity towards one another imposes upon each one of us, and even more so, to be deprived of the blessings attached to their fulfillment. They are, I see by the letter which I received last week with your name affixed to it, humbly begging for money to rebuild churches amongst the rich and wealthy people of South Carolina, whilst we are here in the state of Illinois, not rebuilding, but creating what we euphemistically name churches, not among the rich but among the poorest of the poor. Yes, Dear Bishop, take notice, that all my congregations are so very poor, that, in spite of their good will, they cannot afford enough to put up a very humble house of worship for themselves. Therefore, Dear Bishop, do not expect anything from me.

Our church at Fountain Green is very slowly building; we having been disappointed in the sawing of the lumber."<sup>18</sup>

With this letter we take leave of good Father Saint Cyr. Broken in health, as he was, and unfit to cope with the hardships and privations of missionary life in the backwoods, he was appointed in 1838 pastor of the ancient parish of Kaskaskia in succession to Father Benedict Roux. Here within a comparatively small compass he ministered to 85 souls, had 61 baptisms in the first year, 22 marriages, 19 funerals and 4 converts. He also acted as professor and chaplain to the Sisters of the Visitation until July 19, 1843, when Father Heim took his place as confessor of the sisters, but not as pastor of the parish. The diocese of Chicago being erected in 1844 with all Illinois as its territory, Father Saint Cyr declined to sever his connection with St. Louis; and on the 11th of September, 1844 left Kaskaskia in charge of Father Vital Van Cloostere. On the 23rd of September of the same year, he was appointed chaplain of the Sisters of the Visitation on Sixth Street in St. Louis at a salary of \$100.00 a year, as Father Saint Cyr himself states. Of his first year's salary the chaplain devoted \$10.00 to help pay St. Patrick's church debt.<sup>19</sup>

But though poor and sick he felt that his days of usefulness were not over: we shall meet good and kind and pious Father Saint Cyr again under more favorable circumstances.

<sup>18</sup> Saint Cyr to Rosati, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>19</sup> Biographical notices in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

## FATHER HILARY TUCKER IN QUINCY

The petition of the English speaking portion of Father Brickwedde's Congregation for a priest of their own nationality preferably Father Hamilton, apparently lay dormant for a rather long time, but was not quite forgotten by Bishop Rosati. At last it was answered by the appointment of Father Hamilton's fellow student in Rome.

Father Hilary Tucker was a son of Nicholas Tucker of Perryville, grandson of Joseph Tucker, one of the pioneers of Perry County. Old Mr. Joseph Tucker, as he was called, came to Missouri in June 1802, on a visit to Isidore Moore, who had established himself near Perryville in 1801. He was soon followed by his sons, among them Nicholas, the father of Hilary and of Lewis, the future pastor of Fredericktown. The first chapel in Perry county had been built and blessed in 1812 by the Rev. James Maxwell, Vicar General, who attended the place from Ste. Genevieve until his death in 1814. Before 1812 Mass had occasionally been said at the home of Old Joseph Tucker. After 1814 the Trappist Marie Joseph Dunand, visited Perryville at regular intervals, from his parish of Florissant, and made his home, for the time being, with Old Joseph Tucker, who as Father Dunand states, had eight sons and one daughter, all except the youngest, married and "settled about him in good homes." Father Dunand is full of praise for these excellent people. "I enquired" says he "how they living in such a secluded place, had passed their Sundays and Holy days without Mass. They answered that on these days all the families of the district assembled three times; the first time they recited the prayers of the Mass; the second time they recited the beads or other prayers and followed this by singing hymns and canticles; and the third time some one of the better instructed taught catechism, not only to the children, but to the married folks as well. I could not help admiring this beautiful arrangement, which the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of righteousness and simplicity, has established among these pious planters, so simple and so free from malice. I imagined myself carried back to that blessed epoch of the birth of the church. I fancied I saw these first Christians instructed by the Apostles and so united by their charity that they were but one heart and one soul. I would have liked well to have remained with such good people and to have chosen this holy spot for my home, but Divine Providence called me elsewhere."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dunand, *Diary in Records of American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, vol. 26.

Coming of such good Catholic stock and falling under the influence of such a *zelator animarum* as Father Dunand was, the youthful Hilary felt himself called to the sacred ministry. What made the project easier of accomplishment was the fact that, through the influence of the Trappist monk, Bishop Du Bourg had been induced to found his seminary of St. Mary of the Barrens, in the immediate neighborhood of the Tucker settlement. Both Lewis and Hilary Tucker entered the seminary. Hilary was two years younger than his brother, being born in 1808, and whilst Lewis continued his studies at the Barrens, Hilary was chosen by Bishop Rosati to take a course of philosophy and theology at the Propaganda in Rome. Of his stay there the letters will give ample information.<sup>2</sup>

The two young men were to start for Rome in the year 1831 but a delay of one year was brought about by the rumors of revolution in Italy, and the fact that the cholera was raging in Europe. But young Hilary wrote his bishop a reassuring letter, full of the easy familiarity of youth.

"The cholera I think, should not deter us from the journey, for in all probability our own country will be subject to it. So by remaining here we shall run the same risk as by going to Europe and, if it should please God that we should die, Italy can give us a grave as well as Missouri."

Arriving at Rome, they were very kindly received by Father Paul Cullen, the future Cardinal Archbishop of Dublin, and treated with distinguished consideration. They soon felt perfectly at home in their new surroundings, though at times a tinge of homesickness colors the flow of their voluble letters:

"Think not, writes Hilary Tucker, that the immense ocean and the great distance which now separates us diminishes in the least my love for you all; on the contrary, I find by experience that the farther I am removed from you the dearer I find the ties of love and affection for you all without exception. Yet I do not desire to return home, for I see such a field of science before me with so many facilities which I never before imagined, that I cannot permit such a thought to enter my mind at present."<sup>3</sup>

Still the interests of their native diocese and of its bishop, their friend and father, were always uppermost in the hearts of both Hilary Tucker and George Hamilton:

"I am really overjoyed to hear of the progress Catholicity is making in my country and especially in Missouri. Although our Holy Religion is attacked and persecuted by our poor misguided brethren

<sup>2</sup> Hilary Tucker to Rosati in Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>3</sup> Hilary Tucker to Rosati, *ibidem*.

of the Protestant faith, I think that we have reason rather to rejoice than to lament on this account. For our Holy Religion will always flourish and gain strength from persecution, and I should certainly tremble for her, had she no enemies. This is a remark made to me by Mr. Connelly, and one which first induced him to examine the tenets of Catholicity. For," said he, "I thought that a religion persecuted as the Catholic Religion has been, could not stand out against so many tempests, were it not the true one."

"I am well aware of the disadvantages under which religion labors in my country on account of the great scarcity of native clergy, of which you spoke with so much reason in your last letter. Would to God that more would take into serious consideration the great importance of this object. The American character seems too much engaged in worldly and commercial affairs to think of engaging in the clerical profession. However, notwithstanding all this, I really do yet entertain hopes that, before many years, our country will be able to produce a respectable body of efficient natives for the ministry, for I am persuaded that, when they can be convinced of the real importance of this matter, we will no longer have to lament this great defect. I am sorry that Charles should be the first to dishonor my family by relinquishing so sublime a calling; however, I know not his motives for so doing.<sup>4</sup>

Another short passage from the Roman letters of Hilary Tucker and we are done with this part of the subject.

"The rector was so good as to show me your letter, which you wrote to him. He tells me that he will do all in his power to procure two German priests for your diocese. He desired very much to obtain two from the German College in Rome, for they are all men who have the true Apostolic spirit, and I have no scruple in saying that those educated in the German College in Rome are, generally speaking, the best adapted for our missions of any in the world."<sup>5</sup>

Hilary Tucker was raised to the priesthood on July 2, 1837, and, waiting for the delayed ordination of his friend and companion George A. Hamilton, returned with him to St. Louis, where the privations and hardships of missionary life awaited them.

Having received the minor faculties on November 20, 1838, Father Tucker was employed for a short while as substitute in Carondelet and at Gravois. At the conclusion of the Synod, he was sent to Quincy as pastor of the English speaking Congregation.

Father Tucker's zeal and learning met with a noteworthy initial success. In a short time he collected \$2000.00 for a new church; a lot

---

<sup>4</sup> Hilary Tucker to Rosati, Archives.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

was donated, and a brick building begun. The parish was dedicated to St. Lawrence. A good part of the funds came from the Irish Catholics employed on the construction of the so-called Northern Cross Railroad, and the hopes for the future prosperity of St. Lawrence church were based on the same railroad venture.

We have a number of Father Hilary Tucker's letters covering the period of his ministry in Quincy from June 13, 1839 to September 27, 1840. It will help us to understand the difficulties under which the Church of Quincy labored, if we extract a few characteristic passages from them: "As soon as I returned we immediately began to make preparations for the building of our new church.

The laying of the cornerstone, as you may judge, was not as grand as that of Trinity Church in St. Louis. I simply blessed it, according to the prescriptions of the ritual, and there was but little ceremony about it. The foundations are fast progressing, and the stone work will be completed in seven or eight days from this. Contracts have been made, signed and sealed for the brick and carpenter work. Messrs. Davidson, Hicks and McComb will do the brick work, and Messrs. Osborn and Brittenham the carpenter work, the last mentioned do it at the rate of 70 per cent on the dollar (Cincinnati price bill) which is 20 per cent cheaper than ever done here before. The bricks are laid at the rate of three dollars per thousand, making the whole cost of brick work nine dollars per thousand, which is cheaper than ever done here before. Messrs. S. C. Rogers and S. Kelly are directors of the work. I have no fear of any trouble, the contracts being worded in such a manner as to prevent anything of that kind. I hope we shall have the church ready for consecration by the middle of October when I hope we shall be able to have some display here also; for I shall come down for you and several other gentlemen of the clergy. The Germans are also making preparations for commencing their church. They would have done better to postpone it a little, but they seemed anxious to commence. We have rented a large room in which we can have Mass decently on Sundays until we get our church. All seem very anxious and generously contribute what they can towards its completion. The subscription now amounts to nearly \$2000.00 cash, which will about cover the church in. After which we will open a new subscription, for all say they will give more. I think that it is possible that this summer I shall, with Mr. Kelly, go to Galena with the hope of getting some aid, as the prospect from that quarter is good, and Mr. Kelly is personally acquainted with most of the men there. The whole expense of the church will be about \$4000.00.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Hilary Tucker to Rosati, June 30, 1839, Archives.

At the Synod held in St. Louis, April 21, 1839, Father Tucker reported the number of souls at Quincy as 385, baptisms 27, funerals 4 and converts 4.

On his return to his parish he wrote to Bishop Rosati:

"I hope we shall be able to commence next week the brick work of our church, the stone foundations are almost finished, and if we have no more contradictions, I hope that it will be covered in by the 20th of August. I don't think that Mr. Brickwedde has acted altogether a charitable part. For he has gone with his list among most of the Irish Catholics, which was not looked upon here as very genteel. We have not offered our subscription to a single German, as we knew they had the intention of building. However, be this as it may, the church is progressing very well, and before winter will be fit for consecration. The only thing is that I wish Mr. Brickwedde would be a little more communicative with me than he is. We have rented a place in which we keep church on Sundays. At nine o'clock there will be catechism for those who will dispose themselves for their first communion, but we have got very few children. We will also open up next Sunday a Sunday school. Mrs. Rogers and two or three other ladies have offered their services to teach the girls. I must find some men for the boys. At ten we have Mass and sermon. At three o'clock P.M. I will on, every Sunday, in place of Vespers, give an explanation, in Christian doctrine, which I write and read to the people. The plan I pursue is that laid down by the Catechism of the Council of Trent, commencing with the Creed. With the Divine assistance I will continue until all be explained.

"Next week I shall go to Tully and Warsaw where there are Catholics who have begged me to visit them. I have just this minute also received a petition to go to Pittsfield, 40 miles from this place where there are five families. I must also visit Louisiana where there are two or three families."<sup>7</sup>

From this we learn that Father Tucker had extended his field of operations to the missions beyond the Mississippi.

"I have just returned a few days ago, from a mission to Santa Fe, about 30 miles above this, on the Missouri side. I found about thirty-five Catholic families, almost all Kentuckians, some Irish. They have not seen a priest since last September. They are farmers after the old Kentucky manner, good simple and harmless people, and have a delightful country, and will in a few years be doing very well in the temporal sense of the word. They have a church raised and covered, made of hewn logs, and very well put up, being 40 feet by 25. After

---

7 Tucker to Rosati, June 20, 1839, Archives.

Mass I called a meeting, and we took measures for continuing the work. I hope they will have the flooring in by the middle of August, on which day I promised again to visit them. I will endeavor to give them Mass once a month. I baptized five persons, some of them Protestant, and received two couples into the church, who were married out of it. The church stands on a beautiful piece of ground belonging to the church, of 80 acres; the deed in your name. I think, if we can find some good and trusty farmer to place on it and to make improvements, it would be well. The people are of the same opinion as it would be a means of support. I have just received a letter from a lady in Pittsfield, 40 miles from there, who wishes me to come there to make some arrangements for a church. She offers a lot in the town for a church. I must endeavor next week to go. Pittsfield is the county seat of Pike County. The lady is of Baltimore, was formerly the wife of a naval officer by the name of Long. She has her two daughters and their families with her.

"Here in Quincy we are getting on but slowly with our church. We have been disappointed in getting bricks two or three times. So many buildings are at present going on in the place, that all are immediately used up. I hope, however, we shall soon be able to have a sufficient quantity not to be delayed more. The joists for the flooring are already in. The church is 48 feet long by thirty-five wide in the clear, the walls 16 inches thick and 24 feet high. The steeple is twelve feet square on the end and carried up from the ground in order to support the bell when we get one."<sup>8</sup>

"I was lately at Warsaw about 35 miles above this place, where the old Fort Edward stands. Just before, in digging a well, they found the grave of a person buried there probably for sixty or seventy years, and in it a silver crucifix of considerable size. I was very desirous of getting it, but it fell into the hands of a Protestant lady who would not part with it; she is now in Cincinnati. I will be careful to gain what information I can, that might be interesting to religion or history, in this place."<sup>9</sup>

"I continue to live with Mr. Rogers who has granted me a very convenient and retired upper room. Until we get means of building a house for the priest, I will continue here. I must be very grateful to this very worthy man; for he furnishes me with every convenience gratis. He is not a Catholic, but I hope will be. I ask your prayers for his conversion."<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Tucker to Rosati, July 19, 1839.

<sup>9</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

On August 29, he writes:

"I have this moment returned from Warsaw, 35 miles from here, where I was called two nights since. I have not slept for the last 50 hours and rode 85 miles. Our church gets on slowly. I must see if I can do anything at St. Louis when I come. The railroad system of this state will ruin us I am afraid."<sup>11</sup>

On November 3, 1839 he has unpleasant news for his Bishop:

"Our church is up, ready for the roof, but it must now remain so, until Spring, for we have no funds to proceed. We are now owing about \$800.00, but I hope we will be able to pay this in a month, as we expect near \$600 from the railroad. But this will not be enough. I have thought of going on a begging expedition. The winter is now approaching, and I can do nothing here and would be obliged, at all events, to spend the winter in St. Louis. I have thought of going to New Orleans this winter to see if I cannot do something for this and three other congregations, the one at Santa Fe and Pittsfield. . . .<sup>12</sup>

"I have just returned from Santa Fe. This will shortly be a flourishing congregation. There are now 31 families of Kentucky stock, but poor. They, however, live in great simplicity of manners and resemble much the people of the Barrens. The church there must be finished next spring. I really intend establishing there a convent of the Sisters of Loretto. There are now at least forty girls ready for schooling, and many are even married without any instruction whatever. There are eighty acres of good land, belonging to the church. It will be very easy to open a farm and maintain a good school.

"In Quincy, also, there are but few Catholics: yet a female school is absolutely necessary, and we must have one. Governor Carlin, Judge Ralston and some of the most influential men of Quincy have urged it on me much. I even believe they will provide a good home and contribute largely to the support. Next spring I will make them some proposals. The Governor's daughters go to church and, I believe, before long they will openly profess themselves Catholics, for they are so in heart. At Pittsfield, next Spring, we will commence a small brick church. A lot, and liberal subscription have been given for that purpose. There are twelve families.

"This is only a commencement of what may be done with patience and perseverance. I, on my late tour on the river, in Lewis and Clark counties (missions) baptized four Protestants."<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Tucker to Rosati, August 29, 1839.

<sup>12</sup> Tucker to Rosati, November 3, 1839.

<sup>13</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

At the opening of the year 1840 Father Tucker makes arrangements for his eastern trip:

"I will get Lefevere to come here once a month to give the people Mass. Mr. Hamilton (at Alton) also will visit them. With respect to establishing an Academy for females here, I have received the most flattering prospects. Four of the most influential men of the town say they will purchase a lot or a permanent establishment. Judge Ralston even thinks that \$3000 could be raised in the Spring for that purpose. I don't think so much can be done, but a good house can easily be rented and a good school commenced: In the meantime a house of their own could be built. Governor Carlin is of opinion, a part of the state school-fund may be obtained from the Legislature, at least next Spring, if we would make the attempt. The Governor's four children, Judge Ralston's two sisters-in-law and Dr. Rogers' family, at my return, in all probability, will all be received into the church, as they are now receiving the necessary instructions. But some of them have not yet the courage to declare themselves publicly. Mr. Conyers, the County Treasurer, to whom we are owing about 150 dollars talks of putting an attachment on the church to secure himself. Should he do so, the only thing you have to do, as the deed is in your name, is to make use of what the law allows, which is eighteen months' grace. As soon as possible I will send Mr. Conyers the money. He is an excellent and upright man and will do nothing but what is right, but he, like many others, is greatly pushed for cash. The river here is entirely closed."<sup>14</sup>

But the Northern Cross Railroad Company failed; and the church was hardly completed, when it was sold under a lien by the contractor, Brittenham. Still, by some amicable arrangement, the church continued to be used by the congregation, and Father Hilary Tucker strained every nerve to meet his financial obligations. In 1840 he received permission to go on a collecting trip for the benefit of his church, on which he achieved good results, so that the parish soon recovered from its early disaster.

On the 21st day of April 1840, Bishop Rosati communicated all his faculties, ordinary and extraordinary, to the Very Rev. P. J. Verhaegen, S. J., for the time of his absence from the diocese, and on April 27th he left St. Louis in company of Father Peter P. Lefevere and Joseph A. Lutz for Baltimore where they were to assist at the Fourth Provincial Council, announced for May 17th, 1840. After the close of the Council, Bishop Rosati set sail for Havre, thence he journeyed to Paris and Rome, securing there from the Holy Father the appointment of his coadjutor and successor Peter Richard Kenrick. Whilst in Rome, Bishop Rosati received the following letter from the Pastor of Quincy:

---

<sup>14</sup> Tucker to Rosati, January 11, 1840.

“I know not if it is the custom for any of your clergy, or all of them, to keep in correspondence with you, now that you are away. I for my part, as I am now on the point of complying with my obligation of writing to Propaganda, have thought it proper to address you also, more especially as I have many interesting items to communicate to you. It has been with the greatest pleasure that I read in the papers the notice of your safe arrival in Paris. May God grant you a speedy and propitious return. Here in our city (for Quincy is now by law entitled to that appellation) Catholicity is prospering. Indeed it seems that the hand of God is with us, and that He intends shortly to bring to light something great for the cause of religion here, for certainly we have lately had some signal triumphs. You should recollect that a little more than a year ago, when I came here, I found but a few Catholics in the midst of the most bigoted class of New England Presbyterians that can be imagined, and in the very hotbed of abolitionism. I scarcely dared show myself in the streets for fear of them, and, indeed, I have often been pointed out as an emissary of Antichrist. A great change has been effected in the public feeling in my regard. And now it is only by a certain number of Presbyterian Abolitionists that I am hissed at.

“About three weeks ago five hundred of the Potawatomi Indians passed through this place on their way to the Far West from the graves of their fathers, whence the stern arm of an unjust power has driven them. Three hundred are Catholics. They remained with us two days. The Rev. Mr. Baignin was with them. I caused them to come to the church, and at ten o’clock I sang for them the High Mass, at which they assisted with an air of piety, devotion and simplicity, which covered many a Catholic with confusion for his own conduct. After Mass their Pastor addressed them in a discourse, to which they listened with the same attention. At his request I immediately repaired to their camp and commenced hearing confessions by means of an interpreter, and did not leave my place until mid-night, having heard 150, among whom was their chief. Next morning being Sunday, they repaired to the church as many as could, and received their Savior, after which they immediately crossed the Mississippi and pursued their journey. All the city witnessed all this, and it has been productive of good to our religion. But it has pleased God to grant still greater triumphs. I think you are acquainted with Miss Emily Carlin, eldest daughter of Governor Carlin. She delivered before you and Bishop Loras an address at Kaskaskia. She is now no longer among the living, but thanks to God, her death was signally glorious to Catholicity. Ever since her return from the convent she has always taken the defense of Catholics in this place. In fact, she was only waiting your return,

publicly to embrace it in a solemn manner, as she had often told me. She had thoroughly prepared herself, and when she was taken sick, she immediately sent for me, earnestly entreated to go to confession and be baptized. I told her confession, in her case, was unnecessary. She then received baptism at my hands in the midst of her family and many friends, with the sentiments of an angel. From that time till her death, two days after, her thoughts were all in God. She longed to die and be with Him. At her earnest request I did not leave her presence till death, when, on the morning of the 14th of September, she sweetly gave up her soul to God. Before her death she gave orders for her burial, all according to the rites of the church, and her interment in our new cemetery. She spoke of you in her last moments and called you her dear bishop. All the city was covered with gloom; for she had been the admiration of all. The Supreme Court of the State was then in session. It immediately adjourned to attend her funeral, the order of which was as follows: At 8 A.M. on the morning of the 16th of September all met on the great square before the residence of the Governor. Then a large company of foot-men led the way; then a numerous company of horsemen, then the mounted pall-bearers preceded by the marshal, all with their appropriate garb of mourning, twelve in number; then came the corpse, next myself in soutan, surplice and stole, with attending physician in a carriage; then the family of the Governor, then Senator Young and family, then the lawyers of the court, and at least 100 carriages. We repaired thus to the church, where the funeral rites were performed, after which I briefly addressed the multitude. Then we proceeded in the same order to the grave-yard and returned in like manner. Such has been the death of this eminently talented young lady. All the papers have vied with one another in their eulogiums on her. I have no doubt but that I shall soon receive the whole family in the church. I am now almost every day with them. The death of Emily has had a thrilling effect on many. Reports have already been circulated by the Presbyterians, that I forced her to embrace the Catholic religion. Their envy is insatiate and finds no relief but in calumny. Indeed, I have been solicited by some of my Protestant friends here to prosecute one, who stands high in society, for a libel on me. If more is said, I will certainly do so, for I know it would at once cause them, even here, to be cautious in regard to Catholics, and I fear nothing from them, as all has been public. Judge Young, the Governor, and many of the most influential lawyers would ardently wish it. The person who has been so officious in this case is a Mrs. Tillson, wife of the wealthy brother of John Tillson, agent of the Illinois Land Company, whose lady and family is a very different one from the one in question.

“But God has not stayed His hand even here, the Rev. Mr. Dowan, German Lutheran minister of this place, a man well known in all the eastern cities, will soon declare himself publicly a Catholic. He will set out next spring for Belgium, where he wishes to receive the priesthood. He is not willing yet that anything should be said about it, as he thinks, the impression on his heretofore brethren would be too great. Such, dear Bishop, are some of the items that I have to communicate to you. I have established a branch of the Temperance Society, similar to those in Ireland. For, at the last election our Irish disgraced themselves in a public riot, so much that the civil force was called to quell it. I have restored things to order, and on the next Sunday I published from the altar my intention. Although there have been threats made by some wealthy German dealers in liquors that, if I said anything, they would drive me from Quincy. I told them from the altar that I knew what had been said, and that I was ready to suffer even death if necessary in discharging my duty, and that I would raise my voice against such excesses. They have attempted nothing so far. Our little society in the meantime increases, and we now have about thirty members. It is called the Roman Catholic Temperance Society of Quincy. But dear Bishop, do not imagine that I am free from troubles of the most distressing kind. I assure you I am harrassed beyond measure. I have been grossly slandered even by those who bear the name of Catholics. Letters have been sent to F. Verhaegen long before I knew of it. I then laid my case before him, and he wrote me a consoling letter and encouraged me to go on. May God pardon all, is my prayer. But slander is indeed very dampening to my courage. Dear Bishop, our church must be finished. I hope we will have it ready for consecration by the end of October. It is the prettiest one in Illinois, but we shall be in debt. You really must assist us. It weighs heavily on my mind. I have written to the Cardinal Prefect asking some assistance. I hope you will advocate my cause with him, which is your cause. I think he will do something. There is no doubt that this place is destined to be shortly a city of 15,000 inhabitants, and we must rise with it. This is the opinion of the most intelligent here, who though Protestants, wish for the success of Catholicity. The Presbyterians are straining every nerve to get the ascendancy. Some of their most distinguished ministers have endeavored to entrap me, but above all Dr. Nelson, the abolitionist. Oh, that our church was finished, and that some distinguished controversialist could spend a month with me. I have some hope of having Bishop Purcell here to consecrate the church, as he will be on a visit to St. Louis to see his sister. I shall have a comfortable parsonage finished before winter.

"Mr. Rogers and Mr. Whitney deserve the eternal gratitude of the Catholics of this place; but they cannot do all. I pray you then to do what you can for me, for my health is really sinking under anxiety. Not long since my horse and fell and rolled over me and much injured my breast; but I hope that it will not prove fatal."<sup>15</sup>

In concluding this chapter on the early days of Quincy, we would give the few dates we have gathered on the later period of Father Hilary Tucker's life.

Up to 1844 Quincy, together with all western Illinois, was both de facto and de jure a part of the diocese of St. Louis. But in that year the diocese of Chicago was organized, including the entire state of Illinois. Father Tucker thus, as pastor of Quincy, exchanged his membership in the diocese of his old friend Rosati for that of Chicago; and in 1845 Bishop Rosati died in Rome. A number of the older clergy retired from the western missions; and as Father Hilary's companion Father George Hamilton, followed a call to the more cultured East, he himself asked to be released from the diocese of Chicago. In 1846 we find Father Hilary Tucker in Boston, Mass., in 1847 in Lowell, from 1848 to 1852 in Providence, and from 1852 to 1872 at the Cathedral in Boston, where he died March 15, 1872.

Father Hilary Tucker was a man of strong character, even impulsive at times, with a high idea of his calling and filled with zeal for the conversion of souls. His early missionary life at Quincy and the surrounding stations was a sore trial to him; yet he held to his post of duty until the disaster was repaired, and all went smoothly once more.

He was a man capable of deep and lasting friendships. What drew him to Boston and the East was, not so much a desire for an easier life, but rather the friendships he had contracted in the early Roman days. The saintly Father Lewis Tucker of Fredericktown was, in some respects, the very reverse of his brother. Unassuming, abstemious, careless of comfort and personal appearance, good old Father Lewis Tucker never wrote a letter except on compulsion and then invariably wrote in such a matter-of-fact style that it would have grated on the nerves of Father Hilary, if he had ever been favored with one. Many years ago the good people of Fredericktown told me of a visit of the portly Father Hilary to his elder brother, good old Father Tucker, on which occasion Father Hilary reproached the pastor of Fredericktown with the poverty of his surroundings and actually threw all the dishes out of the house, replacing them with a set of new ones.

---

<sup>15</sup> Tucker to Rosati, September 27, 1840.

## CHAPTER 36

### THE EARLY GERMAN PARISHES OF SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS

The French influence in the Church on the borders of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, that had been predominant or almost exclusive since the days of the early Jesuit missionaries, began to wane with the advent of the Americans from East and South: but its power was finally extinguished in the thirties of the nineteenth century by the swarms of Catholic immigrants from Ireland and Germany. This was especially noticeable on the prairies of Illinois, in the counties of St. Clair, Clinton, Monroe and Randolph. The ancient parishes in these counties, Cahokia, Prairie du Rocher, and Kaskaskia, indeed, remained French, but their territory was literally studded with thriving settlements of German and Irish Catholics, who soon after their arrival, began to clamor for priests of their own nationality, and offered to build churches and schools of their own.<sup>1</sup>

On August 27th, 1836, Father Francis Regis Loisel entered upon his duties at Cahokia. On October 27th, he said mass for the first time at French Village; On December 8th, and 9th, at Belleville, and soon after at St. Thomas near Millstadt. There were no churches of any kind at these places. The first attempt at building was made at St. Thomas, where Father Loisel<sup>2</sup> said Mass at the house of James Powers. About twenty-five persons were present, and six received communion. He spoke to them of building a little chapel, and they concluded, that on Wednesday, the 24th of November, the parishioners should assemble to cut down trees for the construction of the chapel to which they would give the name of St. Thomas, the Apostle. January, 24th after Mass, a subscription was taken up for the new church, which amounted to 82 dollars, and three trustees were elected: John O'Brien, James Power and Bernard Sloey.

In his excursions through the Counties of St. Clair and Clinton Father Loisel found such a large number of German Catholics, that he was moved to ask Bishop Rosati for a German Assistant, namely the newly ordained Father Ambrose Heim. But Father Heim was needed at New Madrid. On December 13th, the Bishop had given faculties to Rev. Charles Meyer, a recent arrival from Basle, in Switzerland.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Bruté's cry for help in May, 1837, "How I tremble to think of this situation; I hear nothing spoken about except the emigrants and the cry for priests that goes up on every side."

<sup>2</sup> Concerning Father Loisel cf. Msgr. Holweck's article in "Pastoral-Blatt," vol. 52, No. 6, Englished in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 103 ss.

Father Meyer was then staying with relations at Shilo, near Belleville, about eight miles from Cahokia, where the Stauder family had erected a small chapel on their own land. From Shiloh, Father Meyer was to visit the Germans of Johnson's Settlement, where St. Thomas Church was blessed by Bishop Rosati on November 26th, 1837. Father Loisel received an assistant in the person of Father John Kenny. Father Meyer's faculties extended to all the German Catholics of Illinois, even those living in Cahokia itself.

In 1837, Father Meyer, writes that the mission of St Michael is attached to Teutonia, of which he has charge, and that his residence is at Shilo. The German Catholics of St. Augustines in Prairie du Long were, as a matter of course, under his jurisdiction. The log-church at St. Thomas, however, was abandoned, when the church at Millstadt was completed. The chapel at Shiloh also ceased to be used for services, when the Church at Belleville was built. In the Records written by Father Saulnier Father Charles Meyer is given as pastor of Belleville in 1836 and 1837; but from 1838 to 1843 he is styled "Pastor of St. Andrew's, Teutonia, St. Clair County, Illinois."<sup>3</sup>

At a later date the name of Teutonia was changed to Paderborn, and the new church was dedicated to St. Michael. It is still a prosperous Parish. In 1814 Belleville had become the County seat, and consequently attracted a large influx of people from the surrounding settlements who were, for the most part, Germans. The Catholic Germans were in charge of Father Meyer, who however, kept his residence at Shilo, Mass was said in the Court-House at first, and later, on at the home of the Huber family. These Germans were mostly from Alsace and Lorraine. In 1837 John O'Brien donated land on which the church was to be built. The first resident priest at Belleville was Father Joseph Kuenster, who arrived in 1843. It was now decided to build on a two acre tract purchased from Joseph Meyer. The corner-stone was laid in the Spring of 1843. Means failing however in the course of the year, the building remained unfinished, but was used for divine services for a time in that condition. Mass was celebrated within its walls for the first time on Christmas morning 1843, one month after the erection of the diocese of Chicago. In 1845, Father Kuenster was succeeded by Father Gaspar Henry Ostlangenberg. Father Ostlangenberg, however, had a very interesting course of life in the sacred ministry prior to this appointment, the greater part of which was passed in eastern Illinois.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Parish Chronicle of Cahokia. Van der Sanden has this note in regard to Father Mayer's place of residence: 1836 Parochus Belleville, 1837 Pastor Teutoniae. Haec Teutonia habebat titulum Ecclesiae S. Andreae, qui locus dicitur 5 vel. 6 miliaria a Belleville, sed nunc (1839) abolitus.

<sup>4</sup> Holweck, Msgr. F. G. Gaspar Henry Ostlangenberg in "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, p. 43 ss.

Gaspar Henry Ostlangenberg was born March 4, 1810, of wealthy parents, the owners of Ostlangenberg Manor, near Langenberg, Kreis Wiedenbrueck, Diocese of Paderborn, in Westphalia. Probably he made his classical course in some Westphalian town, until he resolved to abandon his country and embrace the life of a poor missionary in some wilderness of the Mississippi Valley. At the age of twenty-three he crossed the ocean to enter St. Mary's Seminary at the Barrens, Perry Co., Missouri. He arrived there November 1st, 1833.

February 24, 1835, Father Regis Loisel wrote to Bishop Rosati of St. Louis, that the student Ostlangenberg was grievously sick. In pioneer days, when the ax of the colonist cleared the forest and his plow broke the virgin soil, fevers broke out even in the healthiest locations and drove many a tradesman and many a missionary back to his home in Europe.<sup>5</sup>

March 4, 1835, Bishop Rosati wrote to Cardinal Fransoni: "Amongst them (the Alumni of the Seminary) a German, a promising young man, by the name of Gasp. H. Ostlangenberg, of the diocese of Paderborn in Prussia, has no dimissorial letters from his Ordinary; he cannot obtain them, because he left his country, when by law he was still subject to military conscription. The Bishops are prohibited from issuing such letters, unless the applicants have first satisfied their obligation. Wherefore I humbly ask Your Eminence to obtain for me from the Holy Father the faculty to ordain the aforesaid young man without the dismissorial letters from his Ordinary. When still a layman he left the diocese of Paderborn and emigrated to America."<sup>6</sup>

March 15th, 1835, Pope Gregory XVI granted to Bishop Rosati the faculty he had asked for, but shortly after the Exeat for the young student arrived from Paderborn. Both documents, the Roman privilege and the Exeat from Paderborn are preserved in the office of the Rt. Rev. Chancellor in St. Louis. Ostlangenberg's friend and colleague at the Seminary was his countryman, Henry Fortman, later on well known at Chicago as pastor of Grosse Point. Ostlangenberg was ordained subdeacon July 22, 1837; the order of the Holy Priesthood was conferred upon him July 7, 1838. On July 20, 1838 Bishop Rosati, according to his Diary, gave the major faculties to Rev. J. A. Lutz, the minor faculties to Rev. Gaspar Henry Ostlangenberg. As the newly ordained priest spoke English fairly well, the Bishop kept him at the Cathedral until January 1839, as assistant to Father John Fischer, the acting pastor. Probably, as Father Holweck surmises, he intended the young strong and energetic man, who felt himself at home in the three most necessary languages of the diocese, the French, English and German, for the new parish to be formed in the southern part

<sup>5</sup> Holweck, l. c., p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Rosati to Fransoni, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

of the city: but events were more potent than the plans of men. The building of the new church had to be postponed indefinitely; and from Illinois came the urgent call for a priest, just as Father Ostlangenberg was known to be.

On Little Muddy Creek, St. Clair County, Illinois, a few Irish immigrants had built their log cabins; they were joined by some North-Germans, mostly from the diocese of Paderborn. Because St. Liborius, Bp. C. is the patron of Paderborn, the colony was called "Libory Settlement." In August 1838, B. Dingwerth and W. Harwerth went to St. Louis and asked the Bishop to send a priest to the new and promising colony, a priest who could speak both languages English and German. He sent Father Ostlangenberg, to see what could be done for the Libory people. On August 5, 1838, Ostlangenberg said the first Mass for the colonists in the log house of Mr. W. Harwerth. He encouraged them to build a chapel, then returned to St. Louis to direct the undertaking from there as well as he could. The ground for the new church was donated by B. Dingwerth. On October 21, 1838, Bishop Rosati writes in his diary: "Today I received the visit of a certain German man who lives on Little Muddy Creek, in St. Clair County. He asked for the permission to build a church which is to be called after St. Luke. At that place there are twenty German families and on the other side of the creek seven more, who also wish to build a church; finally at the little river called Shoal Creek, there are about sixty families, amongst whom a church must be built in honor of St. Boniface. If it be God's will, Mr. Ostlangenberg will have charge of these parishes."<sup>7</sup>

The same diary enables us to follow the development of things:

On December 1, 1838: I told the German Catholics who live on Okaw River, St. Clair County that after New Year's I would send to them Father Ostlangenberg to reside in their midst.

On January 19, Bishop Rosati gave the papers of institution to the parish of St. Thaddeus on Silver Creek, the mission of St. Liborius at Fayetteville and St. Boniface, Shoal Creek, to Rev. Gaspar Henry Ostlangenberg, together with the major faculties.

On January 21st, 1839, Rev. Mr. Gaspar Henry Ostlangenberg left St. Louis for the missions of St. Thaddeus and of St. Liborius at Fayetteville, St. Clair County, Illinois, thirty miles distant from St. Louis.

After his arrival in the settlement, the young priest made his home in the sacristy of the unfinished church. On April 21st, 1839, he reported to Bishop Rosati the following facts about St. Libory: "The church is not blessed, there is no bell, no baptismal font, but there is a confessional and a tabernacle. No residence for the priest, who

---

<sup>7</sup> Rosati's Diary.

lives in the sacristy. He uses German and English in preaching, sings High Mass on Sundays (German Hymns) in the afternoon Vespers and Catechism. The mission on Shoal Creek, Clinton County has a church and a priest's house."<sup>8</sup> The temporary church-building at Libory Settlement was soon to give way to a new church. The logs for the new structure were ready and the people asked that the corner-stone be laid. But another church, of stone, was in contemplation, when the log church should be put to other uses. Yet the zealous priest was anxious to have a proper place for divine worship.

The people of St. Libory were certainly pious and God-fearing. Soon after their pastor's coming they petitioned him for the establishment of some confraternity, preferably the Confraternity of the "Sacred Agony of Our Savior, for a happy death."<sup>9</sup>

On April 17, 1839, twenty-one men of Shoal Creek sent a petition to Bishop Rosati, written in the German language, in which they asked the Bishop to appoint Father Ostlangenberg their first resident priest. Ostlangenberg would have been only too glad to transfer his residence from St. Libory to Shoal Creek (Now Germantown). Since Bishop Rosati, however, neither read nor spoke German, his secretary, Father Joseph A. Lutz, translated the petition into English for him. For some reason, in the translation, he omitted Rev. Ostlangenberg's name and made the corresponding passage read: "We beg therefore most humbly His Lord's Grace to favor us with a German priest."

Two months later Father Ostlangenberg himself from Shoal Creek, wrote to the Bishop, in behalf of the people of Shoal Creek, who had begged him to write for them as they knew no English: "They long wished to have a priest resident here. They are about 60 families, besides the single men. They have prudently made the account for the support of a priest, which will be, I doubt not, sufficient. I find a solid piety in the Congregation, but their numerous children grow up in ignorance . . . They would very much desire to have me, but I told them, that it perhaps should not be Your wish."<sup>10</sup>

Not receiving the desired answer, the anxious priest renews his petition in a veiled allusion: "My labours are considerable, and there is a great deal of inconvenience, stopping one-half week in one place and the other half in another, as I can hardly take the books necessary for my studies. I am called to Carlisle, a distance of eight miles from Shoal Creek. In its vicinity there some Catholics labouring on the public roads, where there are some sick and many others who ought to comply with their duties. At Shoal Creek there are really in every

---

<sup>8</sup> Ostlangenberg to Rosati, April 21, 1839.

<sup>9</sup> Ostlangenberg to Rosati, May 8, 1839. The priest had dedicated the church in honor of St. Liborius, although the Bishop had selected the name of St. Thaddeus.

<sup>10</sup> Ostlangenberg to Rosati, from Shoal Creek, June 16, 1839. Archives.

house two or three sick persons. At Libory Settlement there are some sick too; I am also called some twelve miles towards Kaskaskias where there are some Catholic families."<sup>11</sup>

But on the day on which Bishop Rosati received Ostlangenberg's letter, August 3rd, he appointed Father Henry Fortmann first pastor of Shoal Creek. Father Ostlangenberg had to remain at St. Libory, with the missions of St. Luke at Fayetteville and St. Barnabas at Belleville.

When in the Spring of 1830, Father Lefevere of St. Paul's on Salt River joined Bishop Rosati and his Secretary Father Lutz on the trip to Baltimore and across the sea, Father Ostlangenberg was sent by the Administrator, Father Verhaegen S.J. to the missions in Ralls, Warren, Pike, Monroe, and Clarke Counties in Missouri. He resided at Indian Creek in Monroe County. But the hardships and dangers and privations he had to undergo proved too heavy a burden for the enfeebled and very sensitive priest. In November of the following year Father Verhaegen transferred him to Galena, Illinois, to assist Father Remigius Petiot, in the various stations that were springing up along the Illinois-Wisconsin boundary.<sup>12</sup> Whilst living at Galena, he attended St. Matthew's church at Shullsburg, one of the foundations of Father Mazzuchelli in Wisconsin. At the erection of the diocese of Chicago in 1843 Father Gaspard Ostlangenberg severed his connection with St. Louis. But he did very important services to the new diocese of Chicago, at Belleville, where he established peace among the contending factions, and completed the church left unfinished by Father Henry Kuenster in 1835.<sup>13</sup>

It was on August 4, 1839 that Father Fortmann received his appointment as Pastor of St. Boniface's Church at Shoal Creek.

The beginning of this Congregation, now St. Michaels Parish of Germantown, Clinton County, dates back to a much earlier period. Clinton County is an inland district, and consequently remained an undisputed hunting ground of the Indians up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. From 1781, when the first settlement of whites was made at Bellefontaine in Monroe County, until the subjugation of the Indians of the Miami Country by General Wayne in 1794, the history of the border settlements is a record of constant aggression on the part of the American frontiersmen, and of savage revenge and depredation on the part of the Kickapoos, the Shawnees, the Sacs and Foxes, and other bands of Indians. There was an Indian trail that led over the present site of Belleville to the Indian Camps on Shoal Creek, the

<sup>11</sup> Ostlangenberg to Rosati, from Libory Settlement, August 2, 1839.

<sup>12</sup> Sullivan, T. J., "History of the Church in Wisconsin," p. 540.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Holweck, Ostlangenberg, l. c., 53. The distinguished priest died in Covington diocese on August 9, 1885.

very heart of the Indian Country. The pioneers, that pushed back the Red men to the east and north, were mostly from the eastern states. They were not a religious people, yet the grosser vices were unknown among them. Save for a casual Creole visitor, there were no Catholics among them. Educational opportunities were but few and very primitive. The ubiquitous Irishman, in the person of Mr. Halfpenny, drifted in and was appointed schoolmaster at Bellefontaine in 1785. Medical aid was procured with the greatest difficulty. A disease, called putrid fever, carried off one half of the population of the settlement within the first six months. But land was cheap, and the prairie soil was fertile, and the wild spirit of freedom, brought band after band of reckless Americans to the frontiers of civilization, until the wide undulating prairies of southern Illinois were dotted with homesteads, miles and miles apart. Thus the American pioneers came into possession of the best lands everywhere; but were ready to relinquish them at a reasonable price to any newcomers in order to push on to fresh fields and pastures new.<sup>14</sup>

In such a country civilization was more of a name than a reality, and into this land of promise the Catholic parts of Germany poured a constant stream of honest, morally strong and healthy people, for whom the Fatherland could not offer the means of subsistence. Departure from one's native land forever is a melancholy movement, even when most hopeful. Of course anything that seemed needful for the cultivation of the land and the marketing of its products could be bought in St. Louis; but money was too scarce to allow any such extravagance. However, people were neighborly and helpful. The few utensils and tools that had been brought along from the old home were used with loving care: and the old clothes were worn almost to a frazzle. Wagons and carts were generally of the most primitive home-construction put together without screw or nail or bolt. The wheels were made of heavy disks of wood four feet in diameter and a foot in thickness, cut from a log. A large round hole in the center received the axles. In spite of frequent application of axle grease, the noise that these wagons made passing over the rough roads, could be heard for miles around. Oxen drew these wagons: the yoke was made of hickory wood. Horses were rare and served for riding only. The first German settlers on Shoal Creek had the best opportunities for hunting the wild deer and the still wilder wolf and bear.<sup>15</sup>

Almost all these German settlers were Catholics. In the winter of 1836 and 1837 a number of them made the journey to St. Louis to

---

<sup>14</sup> "Illinois' Early Settlers," pamphlet.

<sup>15</sup> From Notizen ueber die ersten Ansiedlungen der Plattdeutschen Katholiken in Clinton County, Illinois, "Amerika," April 11, 1881.

perform their Easter duty. In the following years they enjoyed the presence of Father Charles Meyer among them.<sup>16</sup>

In the summer of 1837 the settlers on Shoal Creek bought one hundred and twenty acres of land at \$700 for church purposes. At this time the place received its name. Some who came from Westphalia would call it Westphalia, others that came from Hanover, stood for Hanover. Others again would combine the two interests by hyphenating the place as Westphalia-Hanover. Finally all agreed on Germantown.<sup>17</sup>

A church building was the next object proposed. But how to raise the funds was the crux of the question? At last some one broached the brilliant idea to lay out forty acres of the church land in lots of one acre each and to sell them to the highest bidder. The remaining eighty acres were reserved for the Church and priests home and the cemetery. Later on some other portions of the church land were sold for building purposes. Thus the foundation for a thriving city was laid for the sole benefit of the spiritual interests of its future population. The first to erect a building on the town-site was a country storekeeper name Chanton, the second was old Lambert Ficker, the third, Frank Haukap. In this house Father Fortmann took up his residence on his arrival at Shoal Creek.<sup>18</sup>

The first church was an old dilapidated blockhouse, newly roofed and generally renovated. The altar and communion-table were of rough ash wood. As the population grew, a school was opened in which Henry Hemann taught the children free and gratis. At last Father Ostlangenberg, whom Bishop Rosati had promised them, arrived, to be succeeded in August 1839 by the first resident Pastor, Father John Henry Fortmann.

"John Henry Fortmann, born at Lohne, Oldenburg, diocese of Muenster, in 1802, entered the Seminary at the Barrens, June 3, 1833, after he had made two years of theology at Muenster. He was ordained November 1st, 1837, but remained at the Seminary, attending the German colonists at Apple Creek, whilst Father Wiseman served the Kentuckians."<sup>19</sup>

In the Autumn of 1839 the erection of a new church-building was urged upon the people by the pastor. Divine service was held regularly on Sundays and Holy days of obligation. All members brought their old German hymn books to church and sang the old songs to the accompaniment of a melodeon some one had brought from St. Louis. Every Sunday a meeting was held in which the new church was thoroughly discussed. Father Fortmann played the role of architect and

---

<sup>16</sup> Notizen in "Amerika," April 1881.

<sup>17</sup> Notizen—continued—"Amerika," April 1881.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> St. Louis Clergy List.

builder. The plan called for church, school and pastoral residence under one roof. The cost was estimated at \$1000, but in the end amounted to \$1300. Father Fortmann helped felling and moving the logs in the neighboring forest; the logs were cut into planks by means of a crosscut saw. Building operations commenced in Spring 1840, and were practically completed by Easter 1840.<sup>20</sup>

Easter Sunday was a great and joyful day for the good Catholics of Shoal Creek: But a correspondingly great and sad disappointment awaited them. For as the members of the Congregation arrived from all sides in their ox teams, they were told by Father Fortmann, that there would be no Mass in the new church until the deed to the Church-property was made over in Bishop Rosati's name.

Father Fortmann was inexorable in this demand, and during the week following Easter Sunday, the Trustees made out the required deed, and on the following Sunday holy Mass was celebrated in the new temple of God in Germantown.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Notizen, *ibidem*.

<sup>21</sup> Notizen, at end of article.

THE EARLY ENGLISH SPEAKING PARISHES OF SOUTH-  
WESTERN ILLINOIS

The venerable Church of Old Kaskaskia, the object of so many divine visitations, joyous as well as afflicting, relinquished her privilege of being a fruitful center of missionary activity among the scattered settlers in the adjacent territory, to the neighboring Church of St. Joseph at Prairie du Rocher. It was mainly Father Vital Van Clostere that was called upon to do the glorious, but very laborious work. He was ably seconded by Father John Kenny and Father Timothy Conway. Fathers Roux and Saint Cyr were fully occupied with the affairs of the Church and the Convent at Kaskaskia. Harrisonville in Randolph County was visited by Father Hereules Brassac as early as 1818. He was one of Bishop Du Bourg's companions on the *Caravane*: but was placed in Lower Louisiana at an early date.

In 1832, the Church of St. James the younger at Harrisonville was confided to Father Van Clostere, Pastor of Prairie du Rocher. In 1839 the Church, now under the title of SS. Philip and James, was turned over to Father John Kenny pastor, of St. Augustin's, Prairie du Long, with the injunction to hold service there every occurring fifth Sunday, and on all the Feast days of obligation.

The Church of St. Augustin of Canterbury, in what was called English Settlement, or Prairie du Long, in Randolph County, grew out of a settlement made in 1816, by twelve English families from Lancashire, England. It was visited at regular intervals since 1831 by the Pastor of Prairie du Rocher, Father Vital Van Clostere. A log church was built in 1824, and blessed by the zealous Priest at the request of the Bishop. A grant of land of sixty acres was obtained for the Parish by Bishop Rosati, twenty acres of which are located in Monroe County, and forty in St. Clair County. All the buildings of the Parish were located in St. Clair County. The new stone church was consecrated by Bishop Rosati on November 11th, 1838. Since 1837, Father John Kenny was Pastor of the Congregation. In 1842 he was succeeded by Father Ambrose Heim. Father Peter McCabe was its last Pastor under the regime of St. Louis diocese.<sup>1</sup> The oldest organized English Congregation on the Mississippi River was that of St. Patrick's at O'Hara's Settlement, in Randolph County. The place

---

<sup>1</sup> Kaup and Beuckmann in "History of the Diocese of Belleville," pp. 41 and 42.

was founded in 1818 by Henry O'Hara, and a number of Maryland Catholic families, as the O'Haras, Harrells, Mudds, Brewers, Simpsons and Vinsons. Since 1820 Mass was said in the house of Henry O'Hara by Father Desmoulins, pastor of Kaskaskia. The founder of the town at his death in 1824 became the founder of the Parish also by leaving for its use one hundred acres of land. On March 30th, 1830, Bishop Rosati gave faculties to Rev. Regis Loisel to bless the new church at O'Haras. It was a wooden structure, fifty feet long, twenty feet wide and fourteen feet in height. The parish records date from 1831; Father Vital Van Clostere from Prairie Du Rocher, regularly attended the place from 1832 to 1838. From 1839 to 1841 Father John Kenny was in charge to be succeeded in 1843 by Reverend McCabe of Prairie du Long. The place is now called Ruma, but the church retains the old glorious title of St. Patrick. The parish today consists of about sixty families, fifty of whom are of English or Irish descent.<sup>2</sup> There are two other churches in Southwestern Illinois dedicated to the Apostle of Ireland: St. Patrick's of Tiptown founded in 1838 by a colony of Irish people from Tipperary; and St. Patrick's at Cairo the southernmost town of Illinois. The History of the Diocese of Belleville gives the names of at least fifty pioneer and probably heads of families, that arrived in Tiptown before 1840. There is no record of any priest visiting Tiptown before 1851. Yet such visits were undoubtedly made. New Design which was mentioned by Father Ambrose Heim as a station visited by him in 1843 was in the immediate neighborhood of Tiptown, and possibly was the place of worship for its first settlers.<sup>3</sup>

The construction of the Illinois Central Railroad, brought the first Catholics to Cairo, Illinois. Bryan Shawnessy having the contract for constructing three sections of an embankment there. In 1834 a Church was built, probably under the supervision of Father Michael Collins C. M. of Cape Girardeau, Missouri: The building was "a rough board roofed shanty in the depths of the convenient woods," as an old History of Cairo states. Father Collins continued to serve the Congregation until 1843, when Cairo like the other Illinois parishes and missions became parts of the diocese of Chicago.<sup>4</sup>

Madonnville in Monroe County is the modern name for the ancient settlement of James Mills that was formed in 1804 by Joseph Austin James a native of Maryland but of Welsh decent. The title of the Church was originally SS. Philip and James. In 1838 the place is visited by Father Van Clostere. The Directory of that year states

---

<sup>2</sup> Beuckmann in "History of Belleville," p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Van de Riet and Beuckmann, *ibidem*, p. 42 and 43.

<sup>4</sup> Beuckmann, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

that a church is to be built. Mass was said in the home of Thomas James, a son of Joseph Austin.

From 1840 to 1842 Father John Kenny Pastor of O'Hara's Settlement attends to the spiritual wants of the Catholics of James Mills. In 1841 discussion arose between two factions of the Congregation as to where the new Church should be built. Col. James A. James was the head of those that favored the old site. The Adelsberger family offered a site five miles north.

The Adelsberger faction obtained Bishop Rosati's consent and built a massive log structure on the new site. Both places were visited from Waterloo once a month on Sundays. In 1855 a beautiful stone-church was erected on the James site which was dedicated to Saint Mary the Mother of God, whilst the place itself changed its name to Madonnaville. In 1911 and 1912 the logs of the Adelsberger church were hauled to Madonnaville and sawed into firewood for the parish.<sup>5</sup>

The first great wave of Irish immigration to America was the result of the uprising of 1798. Illinois and the Far West was only indirectly benefited by this event. Most of these early emigrants settled down in the South and in New York and Pennsylvania. In New York they founded an "Irish Emigrant Association" for the purpose of directing Irish families to the recently opening farming-country of Illinois. But, influential men as the leaders of the Association were, they went much further than that: in presenting to Congress a Memorial, "for a portion of the unsold lands in the Illinois Territory," they requested "that the portion may be set apart or granted to the trustees for the purpose of being settled by emigrants from Ireland on an extended term of credit."

Congress took action in regard to this Memorial on December 16th, 1818, by authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to designate and set apart a number of townships, each six miles square in the State of Illinois, each alternate section thereof to be settled by emigrants from Ireland and sold to them at two dollars per acre, to be paid in three installments within twelve years, from the date of sale.

This provision, no doubt, greatly influenced the course of Irish immigration. In the Spring of 1819 hundreds of Irish emigrants arriving at the ports of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and New Orleans were directed into the new land of promise, Illinois. The President of the "New York Irish Emigrant Association" was Thomas Addis Emmett, brother of the Martyr of Irish liberty Robert Emmett.<sup>6</sup>

The high tide of Irish immigration was not reached until about 1847, when the great famine threatened to depopulate the "Island of

<sup>5</sup> Kaercher and Beuckmann, *ibidem*, 51.

<sup>6</sup> "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, p. 73.

Saints and Scholars.” “A whole people was in motion,” wrote Henry Giles, “mighty as an ocean, and continuous as its waves. Compared with the crowds which were then quitting Ireland forever, the armies that all Europe furnished for the Crusades, were trifling bands.”<sup>7</sup> “Multitudes died of hunger, and all who could began to quit Ireland.”<sup>8</sup> “To the United States came the hard-working Irish,” they came when hard work was to be done, when the pathways of the future were to be laid down; when the vast tracts of land were a dead asset, they came to quicken them by their labor. Very poor as most of them were, they brought the great gifts to our American civilization, their strength of arm, their cheerfulness of spirit and their undying Catholic Faith.

So much is plain to any student of the Church in the Mississippi Valley: it was not the wisdom of many, it was not the collective wisdom of Councils and Synods, that established the Church on a firm foundation: it was, under God’s inscrutable Providence, the grandest event of modern times, the new wandering of nations, that accomplished it. It is the magnificent power of immigration from Catholic Ireland and from the Catholic parts of Germany, that merits the main credit of the wonderful success of the Church, in this new land. The Church was not so much founded in this country but rather transplanted to its soil. Compared with these two powerful elements, the remnants of the French founders of some of our cities appear inconsiderable, as also the noble army of native American Catholics and of converts from heresy and infidelity: Both classes have given the Church beautiful examples of holiness and wise leadership: both have gained imperishable renown in our western Annals: the French Catholics as pioneers in the wilderness, the American converts as among the brightest jewels in the Church’s crown. The later arrivals from Southern Europe will come in for their proper share of praise, as they follow in the wake of the Irish and German immigration.

But for some time longer, we shall see the Irish and the German Catholics working side by side in the wilderness of the western country, reclaiming the land for the Church and civilization. Both of them Americans to the core in their love of liberty, order and justice, yet deeply attached to the land of their birth. Both driven across the sea by dire necessity, yet both accepting their lot with equanimity and courage.

For even the illusions of hope must have been considerably reduced when the weary emigrant first set his foot on the soil of what was to be his new home. The German emigrant, who together with

<sup>7</sup> Giles, Henry, “Lecture and Essays,” 1869, p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, *ibidem*, p. 136.

the Irish formed the great bulk of the Catholic pioneers in the prairies of Illinois, must have felt, even more deeply than his Irish brother, the haunting pain of homesickness. There are no people so home-loving and yet so wanderlusting, to use the German phrase, as the Irish. The reason must be that all the world seems to appear to the Irishman in the familiar light of home: like a bird on the wing he carries the sky of old Ireland with him, wherever he goes. The German, on the contrary, when wandering abroad, leaves the better part of his soul in the place where he was born, like the plant that is rudely torn from its native soil and transplanted with but a part of its roots. Still both of these nationalities found in their religion the true bond of union; exemplifying the wise saying of the Canadian statesman Thomas D'Arcy McGee, that "Catholicity recognizes nationalities only to unite them."

We have in this chapter, touched very lightly on Cahokia, Prairie du Rocher and Kaskaskia, leaving all we had to say about them for the next chapter.

Bishop Rosati's predilection for the old French parishes and missions on the Illinois side of the Mississippi was well known. In 1833 Bishop England, whilst in Rome, wrote to Bishop Rosati, that Jean-jean had assured him 'that you (Rosati) want to have the missions on the western side of Illinois added to your diocese.' "I was amused" said England "at the resemblance of a reason that he gave, and the seriousness with which he urged it, viz., that you could not easily go through your own diocese to your Seminary, if this, the American Bottom, was in another diocese. I was asked by Cardinal Castracane about it. I said that I suspected you were very fond of missions for which you had done so much, and that they were very fond of you."<sup>9</sup> Bishop England's suspicion was, of course, well founded. But the reason given by Jean-jean for this desire of Rosati's was the exact truth.

For the journey overland from St. Louis to the Barrens, where the Seminary was situated, was, in those days of almost impassible roads, far more dangerous and difficult than the journey over the fine old French highway on the Illinois side, pleasantly relieved by brief visits to the pastors of Cahokia, Prairie du Rocher, Kaskaskia; thence to Ste. Genevieve across the river, and after a night's rest, overland to Perryville. As a matter of fact, Bishop Rosati obtained his request and by Papal decree, the western half of Illinois was incorporated in the diocese of St. Louis, and remained there until the erection of the diocese of Chicago in 1844.

---

<sup>9</sup> Bishop England's Correspondence with Bishop Rosati, "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. IX, Nos. 3 and 4.

## BISHOP ROSATI'S LAST YEAR IN HIS DIOCESE

It was now twenty-four years since Joseph Rosati had left the Eternal City for the Mission of Louisiana; sixteen years since he had become coadjutor to Bishop Du Bourg, and thirteen years since he was assigned to the new diocese of St. Louis as its first Bishop. It was, therefore, but natural that he should answer the call from home and friends beyond the sea by a visit *ad limina* as well as to the home of his childhood and early youth and manhood. Besides, the much-harrassed Bishop must have a longer rest from work and care. The last years had brought him many sore disappointments. The Cathedral had cost much more than he had anticipated, the copper roof which was to cost \$600, came to \$4,000. Money was scarce, and interest charges were from 10 to 24%. The diocesan debt assumed ever larger proportions whilst the remittances from Lyons and from Vienna had ceased for some time, owing to the report that had been spread by secret enemies, as Rosati thought, "that St. Louis was very rich and could help itself." Bishop Rosati felt that in a visit to Italy and France lay his only hope of liquidating his debts and meeting the necessities of the diocese.<sup>1</sup>

Then the question of obtaining a coadjutor had become a most pressing one. The Bishop's first choice, John Timon, had failed him. The Lazarist Fathers were naturally averse to accepting the episcopal dignity, and their Superior General in Paris had threatened to withdraw all the Lazarists from America, if any of them should henceforth be chosen to fill a see. The Holy Father would surely help in all his great needs, thought Bishop Rosati, and so decided to undertake the voyage that should separate him for a long time, perhaps forever, from the places and the people now so very dear to his paternal heart.

On his way to Europe he would have occasion to attend the Fourth Council of Baltimore, to which he had received a most courteous invitation from Archbishop Eccleston. The summer of 1840 was, therefore, chosen by the Bishop for his first *ad limina* visit, and his joyful home-coming to Sora and Rome. The twelve months intervening between the close of the Synod and the opening of the Provincial Council were set apart for a series of farewell visits to the places that had grown most dear to his heart, through the sacrifices he had made for them and the love that he had found in them.

---

1 As all the items of this chapter are derived from Bishop Rosati's Diary, no special references for the individual statements are given.

Bishop Rosati began these visits with a brief journey to the missions on the east bank of the river. On May 7th, he arrived at Kaskaskia, where he held the usual visitation of the Convent of the Visitandines. Father Dutreluingne was acting pastor of the Parish. The Bishop administered Confirmation to twenty-six persons, among them one convert. As the parish church was in danger of collapsing, and the people were forced to worship in a temporary structure, the plan for a new church was agitated among them. At a parish meeting it was decided 1) that the new Church should be built on a lot donated to the Bishop by Father Van Clostere. 2) that the structure should be of stone 100x45 feet, with an addition containing the sacristy and the parochial residence. Six parishioners were selected to carry out the project under the leadership of the pastor. At the Convent, Sister Seraphine Wickham was elected Superior with Sister Agnes Brent as Assistant.

On Thursday, May 6th, Bishop Rosati departed for Prairie du Rocher, thence he journeyed to Cahokia on a visit to Father Loisel, and on the 18th, the Vigil of Pentecost, he was back in St. Louis. On Pentecost Monday the First Communion services of the Cathedral were held; one hundred and fourteen boys and girls were admitted to the table of the Lord, and together with a large number of others received the sacrament of Confirmation. On the following day the Bishop confirmed twelve pupils of the Sacred Heart Convent. On Trinity Sunday Confirmation services were held at Florissant, on June 2nd at Cahokia. The grand procession planned for Corpus Christi day, for which the Bishop had engaged the music band of the University, was prevented by rain. From Cahokia the Bishop went to Carondelet. On June 21st, he administered the sacrament of Confirmation to twenty-two students of the University of St. Louis. In the following week the Bishop visited Cahokia, Waterloo, Prairie du Rocher and Kaskaskia, where Father Saint Cyr was now pastor and the Sisters' Confessor. On Thursday June 27th, he was in his beloved Seminary of the Barrens, and ordained Michael Collins, and Thomas Burke to deaconship, and John Mary Robert and Michael Domenech to the priesthood. Among the students that received some of the minor Orders on this occasion, we meet for the first time a number of names distinguished in our Annals: Patrick O'Brien, Patrick McCabe, Thomas Cusack, Michael Carroll, Nicholas Stehle, John Cotter, Michael Collins and Thomas Burke. Michael Domenech, is the future Bishop of Pittsburg. On July 1st, Bishop Rosati began writing his book on the *Virtues and Deeds of Father De Andreis*.<sup>2</sup> At the Barrens on July 4th, he heard of the death of his friend Bishop Bruté, and on the next day held solemn

---

<sup>2</sup> Published anonymously under the title, "Life of Very Rev. Felix de Andreis," 1900.

Commemoration services for him. On the following Saturday the Bishop in company with Father Paquin, rides to Apple Creek, and on Sunday administers Confirmation to fourteen persons. Father Fortman preached in German, for the members of the thirty-five German families that formed the Congregation. On July 10th, Bishop Rosati notes that he had completed the Life of Father De Andreis, and had commenced an account of the Foundation of the Congregation of the Mission in America. On the next day he started for Fredericktown to visit Father Cellini. Here he administered Confirmation to twenty-two persons. On June 16th, he returned to the Seminary; thence he journeyed to Cape Girardeau to dedicate the new Church of St. Vincent de Paul. After the services, the Bishop pays a visit to the Sisters of Loretto, who have but recently established a Convent and school in that city. The Bishop's next stop is at Ste. Genevieve, where the Lazarist Fathers Dahmen and Gandolfo are stationed. On July 30th, the Bishop in company with Father Dahmen crosses the river to Kaskaskia and, after a brief stay, returns to St. Louis. During the month of August the Bishop complains of fever. On September 5th, he received a package from Cardinal Frauzoni, Prefect of the Propaganda, which contained the letter of appointment of Father John Timon C.M. as his coadjutor. On the following Saturday the Bishop handed Father Timon his appointment, but received a flat refusal. Father Timon would not accept the episcopate, and Bishop Rosati's fondest hopes were shattered. On September 18th, the two foremost men in the Church of the Mississippi Valley met again at Fredericktown. Father Odin and Domenech, both destined for the episcopate, were present: But Father Timon was obdurate. On the 26th, he is in St. Louis. On October 2nd, the Bishop, accompanied by Fathers Timon and Lutz starts on his visit to the northern missions in Illinois. Father Lutz remains at Paddock Grove, near Edwardsville, but the Bishop and Father Timon proceed to Springfield, where Father George Hamilton is trying very hard to form a congregation of the widely scattered Catholics, and to build a Church for them. From Springfield the journey leads to Pekin and Peoria. A Church is being erected at Pekin, but at Peoria no efforts have so far been made. At Kickapoo, however, there is a stone church in process of erection. Even at Black Partridge a church is in contemplation. On the 6th of October, the travelers arrived at Lasalle, where they were most joyfully received by the Lazarist missionaries Parodi, Estany and Escoffier. The Superior Father Raho, was absent on a visit to the town of Ottawa, but returned in the evening. During the week the Bishop visited Ottawa and, on the following Sunday, administered Confirmation in the Church of the Holy Cross at Lasalle. Father Timon had returned to St. Louis. Under date of October 15th, the good Bishop notes with admiration the poverty, neatness and good order maintained in the church, school,

and home. The Fathers have no servant, they cultivate their garden with their own hands, they do their own cooking, and scrub the church and house. On the 15th, the Bishop and Father Raho departed for Pekin, and passing through Springfield, Bunker Hill and Carlinville, arrived at St. Louis on Saturday, October 19th. On the following day the Bishop administered Confirmation in the Cathedral to Ignatius Octagleave and Peter Okassaweite, both Iroquois Indians from far-away Oregon, who had been baptized in Canada and had spread the knowledge of Christianity among the Indians of the Rocky Mountains, but were now petitioning for a Missionary to preach the gospel among their Indian friends.

On October 28th, Bishop Rosati set out to visit his old and tried friend, Bishop Flaget, on his return from Europe. Father Fontbonne was his companion. They arrived at Vincennes on the 30th, and at Louisville on November 1st. On the following day they reached Bardstown. Great was the joy of our prelate to meet his saintly friend once more. They visited Nazareth, the home of the Sisters of Charity, and the foundations of Father Nerineckx, Gethsemany, Bethlehem and Calvary. On the 8th, they visited Loretto. On hearing of the arrival of the newly consecrated Bishop Hailandiere in Vincennes, Bishop Rosati retraced his steps to that city, and preached the Bishop's installation sermon on Sunday, November 17th. Arriving in St. Louis on November 22nd, the Bishop appointed Father James Bussechotts, S.J. pastor of St. Francis Borgia Church at Washington, Franklin County. On November 29th the arrival of a Jesuit priest and seven postulants from Belgium is recorded in the Diary. Father Peter Donnelly is appointed to the Church of St. Peter at Gravois. The Sisters of Charity receive an accession of three sisters from Emmitsburg, two for the Hospital, and one for the Orphanage. On December 8th, 1839, six years after the foundation of the St. Vincent de Paul Society for the Poor by Frederick Ozanam in Paris, Bishop Rosati called attention to the needs and sorrows of the poor of St. Louis, and organized a Society of laymen for their permanent relief. This movement eventually found its proper form in the organization of the first Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in America, at the Old Cathedral of St. Louis in 1845. Two days after Christmas the Catholics of St. Louis had an unexpected opportunity of helpfulness. About two hundred German emigrants on the way to Missouri on the steamer "*The Missouri Belle*," barely escaping with their lives from the burning boat, came to the city in a pitiable condition. They had lost all their earthly possessions. Forty of them were received into the Hospital of the Sisters of Charity, and for the shelter of the remaining victims of the explosion the Bishop himself gave the use of nine houses he had built near the Church of the Holy Trinity then in the process of construc-

tion. On the following Sunday the gentle Bishop strongly recommended these suffering children of the church to the charity of the faithful. On the last day of the year 1839, Bishop Rosati made a visit to his beloved Kaskaskia. The river is frozen over from shore to shore, and snow covers the wide landscape. The Bishop spends the time of involuntary confinement by writing a large number of letters: but on the 8th day of January he wends his way back to his episcopal city, where he holds ordinations, and on January 14th, raises Joseph De Marchi C.M. to the sacred priesthood. On Sunday, February 9th, the Bishop attended the meeting of the Society for the Relief of the Poor, and on the 16th, he instituted a branch of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. On the 18th, he finished his History of the "Foundation of the Congregation of the Mission in America." On Tuesday, February 25th, he solemnly blessed the Chapel of the Hospital of the Sisters of Charity under the title of St. Vincent de Paul. On Saturday 29th, he received a visit from Father De Smet, who had come to St. Louis from his Potawatomi Mission in Council Bluffs.

St. Patrick's Day was kept at the Cathedral by the Irish people, with the Bishop himself celebrating the Mass and Father Carrell, S.J. preaching the panegyric of Ireland's saint. A collection of \$117.25 was taken up for the Orphan Asylum. On Friday, March 26th, the Bishop and Father Gandolfo were on the way to Kaskaskia. Divine services had to be said in the chapel of the Visitation Convent, as the new church was not yet completed. Crossing the river with difficulty and some danger, they journeyed by carriage to the Seminary where they remained until Thursday. Cape Girardeau was the next place visited, then New Madrid, where Father Odin celebrated Highmass, and the Bishop administered Confirmation. Ascending the river by the steamer *Carinthia*, the episcopal party landed at Cairo, where they found a large number of Irish Catholics. The city of Cairo was then only eighteen months old. The Bishop promised to send Father Michael Collins to the new congregation. Passion Sunday was spent in St. Charles, Monday in Portage, Tuesday at the Jesuit Novitiate in Florissant where the Bishop blessed the Cemetery, and visited the Convent of the Nuns of the Sacred Heart. Thursday evening he was once more in St. Louis, confirming, preaching, hearing confessions, and performing the numberless duties of episcopal life. The Solemn Highmass on Palm Sunday lasted for three and a quarter hours. In the afternoon, the Bishop and all his clergy proceeded to bless and lay the cornerstone for the Church of St. Francis Xavier, which was to be built near the College of the Jesuits. Father George Carrell, S.J. preached the sermon before a vast assembly of the faithful. The ceremonies of Holy week were performed by the Bishop. The Solemn Highmass on Easter Sunday also was celebrated by the Bishop. Father Timon arrived on Good Friday and confirmed the report that he had been appointed

Prefect-Apostolic of Texas and that he would choose Father Odin as Vicar-Prefect.

Under date of April 21st, 1840, Bishop Rosati notes in his Diary: "I made my will and as my heir appointed Reverend Father Peter Verhaegen; if he should fail to accept, the Reverend John Timon, and if he in turn should fail, the Reverend John Elet. "On Sunday April 26th, the Bishop appointed Father John Peter Fischer procurator of the Episcopal residence, Father Fontbonne, Secretary, Joseph Renaud, Prefect of the Sacristy, and Very Reverend Peter Verhaegen, S.J. Vicar-General and Superior of the Episcopal house, in which he is to reside until the Bishop's return from Europe.

On Monday morning after Mass Bishop Rosati, in company with Father Joseph A. Lutz and Peter Paul Lefevere, started on his long and eventful journey from which he should never return to his beloved diocese of St. Louis.

PART TWO

---

THE DIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

BOOK II

*Bishop Peter Richard Kenrick*  
*Coadjutor to Bishop Rosati*



## PART II

### BOOK II

#### CHAPTER 1

### BISHOP ROSATI AND HIS COADJUTOR

At the Fourth Provincial Council of Baltimore which was held from May 17th, to May 24th, 1840, Bishop Rosati took a leading part. He was commissioned to write, in the name of the Council, the Letter to the noble Defenders of the Faith against Prussian tyranny, Clement-August, Archbishop of Cologne, and Martin Dunin, Archbishop of Gnesen-Posen.<sup>1</sup> He was also appointed to report to Rome the reasons why the resignation of Bishop Rezé of Detroit should be accepted at once, and to propose the terna from which his successor should be chosen. In his Diary Bishop Rosati takes credit for the speedy transaction of business by the Council, he having acted as First Promotor, with Bishop Fenwick of Boston as Second, an arrangement to which three of the bishops had objected.

Early on Monday May 25th, Bishop Rosati was on his way to Washington and Georgetown, returning to Baltimore in the evening. On Wednesday he journeyed to Philadelphia. At the house of Bishop Francis P. Kenrick he met his brother, the Vicar-General of Philadelphia, Peter Richard Kenrick. To quote the words, as given in the Bishops Diary: "Admiring more and more his piety, knowledge and modesty and his other virtues, I was inspired with the desire to obtain him from the Holy Fathers as my Coadjutor." Three years previous Bishop Rosati, after the Third Provincial Council of Baltimore, had met Peter Richard Kenrick in Philadelphia, in a house near St. Mary's Church, as Rector of the Seminary, Vicar-General, and Editor of the *Catholic Herald*. He is a priest, "numeris omnibus absolutus:" "a priest in every regard perfect," was Rosati's comment then. But the intervening years between the first and second meeting had been a period of interior conflict for Father Kenrick. He felt himself drawn to the Society of Jesus and found most strenuous opposition to this course among his dearest friends. In order to restore his equanimity as well as his shattered health, he sailed for Rome via Ireland in 1838. He had in-

---

<sup>1</sup> Rosati's Diary, May 22.

tended to start on his trip with Bishop Purcell, on June 16th, but really started a few days later with Father J. McGill. Father Kenrick was to present to the Pope the dedication of Bishop Francis P. Kenrick's Theology, and incidentally, to use his powers of persuasion on the Leopoldine Society of Vienna, from which the diocese of Philadelphia had not received any subsidies for the last six years. Father Kenrick had written his Brother on August 8th, 1839, that he intended to return to Philadelphia without visiting Vienna.<sup>2</sup>

On September 21st, of the same year Bishop Michael O'Connor of Pittsburg the mutual friend of the two Kenricks, had written to Peter Richard in the name of Francis Patrick: "He desires me to say that you must set aside your whims and come home as soon as you can. The terms, in my mouth may not appear very courteous, but I suppose they are intelligible to you, which is more than they are to me."<sup>3</sup> What was the secret hidden under these strange words? Bishop O'Connor lifts the veil in his letter to Peter Richard in Rome:

"I was not aware of the import of the message I communicated in my last from the Bishop. I have learned it since, and I must say, with dismay, I assure you that, under ordinary circumstances, I would be far from dissuading you from your pious design; and even now I would not venture to urge any reason that I would not think capable of standing the most strict scrutiny of any one fresh from the third, ay even the fourth, week of the exercises of St. Ignatius. Your absence would create a vacuum in the diocese which, I think, even on the most sublime principles of perfection, should prevent you from abandoning the field. Talking of these things under other circumstances with the same freedom might deserve much blame, but for such a purpose it cannot but be justifiable . . . . The fact is, I fear very much for the Seminary . . . . Unless some person popular in the city is in the Seminary, down it goes; even the priests are very easy about the way it gets along; it is only the excitement which yet lives, but is every day fading, that brings in contributions."<sup>4</sup> "Now in the name of God," Bishop O'Connor concludes, "with the Seminary in such danger, with the city and the diocese so abandoned, can it be the will of God that you should retire from a field where He blessed your labors and gave clear proof that you were doing His will? I am sure that you miscalculated on the state of the diocese, and you took up positions that were false. You will leave the bishop literally without aid, and many most important posts unoccupied or worse. I knew that, in general, such arguments have no weight on such a topic; but I assure you that I know of some

<sup>2</sup> "Records of the American Catholic Historical Society," vol. VII, p. 299, ss.

<sup>3</sup> Records, vol. VII, p. 340.

<sup>4</sup> Records, vol. VII, p. 344.

cases where similar ones, may even be much less strong, have weighed so strong with most prudent Jesuits, as to have induced them to advise the course I would now advise to you:—to remain in the field where God blessed your labors and where you were certain you were right.”<sup>5</sup>

Bishop O'Connor's letter was directed to Dr. Cullen at Rome, for his personal and eventual transmission to Peter Richard Kenrick, as the following brief note explains:

“Dear Mr. Cullen:—If Mr. Kenrick has entered the Jesuits, destroy this. If not, give it to him and impress its contents on him. It would be a most foolish thing for him to abandon Philadelphia; the diocese will suffer very severely. All right here. Compliments to all friends.

M. O'Connor.”<sup>6</sup>

Father Kenrick must have returned to America soon after the date of this letter, November 23rd, 1839; for on May 27th, 1840, he is back at his post of Vicar-General of the diocese, and President of the Seminary, and besides has done a large amount of literary work. But even now the thought of entering the Society of Jesus was uppermost in his mind. On July 11th, 1840, Bishop Francis Patrick gives his brother Peter Richard a formal testimonial of his excellent standing in the diocese and grants him permission to follow out his purpose of joining a religious community.<sup>7</sup> On July 28th, 1840, M. G. Frenaye informs the Bishop of Father Kenrick's departure from Philadelphia with the surmise: “probably he is now on the ocean.”<sup>8</sup> Father Kenrick's stay in Rome cannot have been of long duration, for on October 4th, he preached at St. Patrick's Church, Norristown, Pennsylvania.<sup>9</sup> Whether he was refused admission to the Society of Jesus or not, it is certain that his thoughts were still of the Order, as Bishop Kenrick hints in his letter to Dr. Cullen, dated May 20th, 1841:

“My brother has just published the *Life of St. Ignatius*, and is engaged in preparing that of *St. Francis Xavier*. You see where his heart lies. He also has translated Geramb's Visit to Rome, which is already out of Press. Lacordaire's *Apology for Religious Orders* is in

<sup>5</sup> Records, vol. VII p. 344.

<sup>6</sup> Records, vol. VII, p. 345 s.

<sup>7</sup> Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence p. 31.

<sup>8</sup> Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence p. 31. A writer in “The Western Watchman” states the following: “Bishop Rosati sailed for Europe on the 1st of June, 1840. Father Kenrick soon followed, bound for England, with the intention of entering the Society of Jesus. Turned down by the Superior of the Society in England ‘because the letters he bore from his brother were of a too highly eulogistic character’ he directed his steps Romeward, in the hope of getting a better reception at headquarters. There, too, he was sorely disappointed and advised to return to America.”

<sup>9</sup> Diary of Francis Patrick Kenrick, p. 193.

Press, and *Audin's Life of Luther* is ready for publication, corrected and improved. He has published *The Month of Mary*. These works have delayed the execution of his purpose but I fear not changed. I do not calculate with any certainty of finding him on my return.'<sup>10</sup>

As to Bishop Rosati's meeting with Peter Richard Kenrick in Rome, there is no evidence whatever; in fact, there is positive evidence to the contrary as the sequel will show.

On Friday, May 29th, 1840, Bishop Rosati left Philadelphia for New York, and on June the 1st, set sail for Portsmouth and Havre de Grace. The Company consisted of the Bishops Portier and Miles, and the priests Joseph Anthony Lutz and Peter Paul Lefevere. The ship that carried them was the "*British Queen*." Sea-sickness was the almost constant companion of Bishop Rosati. On the 15th, of June they caught the first glimpse of the coast of England. Having celebrated Corpus Christi on the eighteenth, they hurried on to Paris, and were most cordially received at the Mother House of the Lazarists.

On Wednesday, July 4th, the three American bishops attended the General Council of the Propagation of the Faith,<sup>11</sup> and explained the condition and progress of their dioceses. After spending three weeks in visiting various church-dignitaries, charitable and educational institutions and a large number of sisterhoods, the Bishop, accompanied by Father Lutz and the Superior General of the Lazarists, Father Nozo, traveled over Sens, Auxerre, Avallon, Chalons, arriving on Thursday evening, July 30th, at Lyons, where he attended a session of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith. At St. Chamond Bishop Rosati met Fathers Janvier and Roux, former missionaries in Louisiana, and also the novices he had sent to Father Querbe to be initiated in the Congregation of the Clerics of St. Viateur. On entering Savoy the Bishop was stopped at Chambery by the Governor General, and threatened with expulsion; but at the intercession of the Bishop of Chambery, he was at last permitted to proceed on his way to Turin. Journeying on by slow stages through northern Italy, and being entertained at every stopping place with effusive demonstrations of affection and honor, the Bishop arrived in Rome about three o'clock in the afternoon of Saturday, September 12th, twenty-five years after his memorable call to the Mission of Louisiana. Once more at Monte Citorio, the good Bishop's joy knew no bounds.

The first visit in Rome was due to Cardinal Frasoni, Prefect of the Propaganda, to whom he delivered the Decrees of the Fourth

<sup>10</sup> Records, vol. VII, p. 306.

<sup>11</sup> Paris and Lyons both were headquarters of the Association de la Propagation de la Foi.

Council of Baltimore. On September 15th, Bishop Rosati accompanied by Father Lutz and several Lazarist Fathers of Monte Citorio visited Castel Gandolfo, the summer residence of the Pope. Pope Gregory XVI was overjoyed to meet the celebrated missionary Bishop, and conversed with him for an hour and three-quarters in the most familiar manner.<sup>12</sup>

Returning to the City Bishop Rosati made a visit to the Nuns of the Sacred Heart, in order to have a talk with Bishop Resé who had his residence in their Convent, but learnt there, that he was absent from home. On Tuesday, September 17th, Bishop Rosati leaves Rome for Sora, his native city, whilst Father Lutz goes directly to Naples to witness the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius. The good Bishop's home-coming to Sora, in the beautiful valley of the Liris, was an event of first magnitude in his life. It was a triumphal procession, such as Sora's ancient sons of greatness and renown, the three Decii, Altilius Regulus, the Valerii and Caesar Baronius, the great historian of the Church, were never honored with. In every town by the way the Church bells were rung in his honor; the chief dignitaries came out to bid him welcome, the Bishop of Sora gave him all the episcopal faculties and asked him to use them just as if he were in his own diocese. Great crowds cheered their illustrious fellow-citizen: bands of musicians struck up their liveliest marches: and in the city itself the Bishop conducted his distinguished guest to the Cathedral. Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, Prelates of every degree, priests, nuns, the civil authorities of the surrounding towns and villages, all vied with the enthusiastic populace, to do honor to the missionary bishop from the fabulous West.<sup>13</sup>

Thus the days passed on in quick succession until the end of October. The Feast of All Saints was kept in Rome; On the fourth of November the Bishop had an audience with the Pope. On Saturday, the 7th, Father Lutz, arrived from Naples. During the first week of December Bishop Rosati, by request of the Congregation of the Propaganda, discussed with Bishop Resé<sup>14</sup> the question of his resignation submitted to the Fathers of the Third Council of Baltimore for transmission to Rome. As Bishop Resé now repudiated this act, the Propaganda appointed Father Odin as his Coadjutor. On his arrival in Rome, Bishop Rosati was requested by Propaganda to move Bishop

---

<sup>12</sup> Diary of Bishop Rosati.

<sup>13</sup> The Diary grows highly eloquent in relating these events.

<sup>14</sup> Bishop Resé, as Vicar-General of Cincinnati, was instrumental in founding the Leopoldinen Stiftung of Austrian Empire, and had obtained from it the first contribution received by Bishop Rosati. As Bishop of Detroit, he was a failure, though not through his fault, his mental derangement was reported to Rome, hence Rosati's visit.

Resé to relinquish to his Coadjutor the temporal as well as spiritual administration of Detroit.

The Propaganda promised to pay him an annual salary of \$1,200. As Bishop Resé would not consent to this arrangement, and was known to be incapable of governing the diocese, the Congregation of the Propaganda was forced to act. Another difficulty arose when the bulls appointing Father Odin, came back with a courteous refusal: but this was solved by the appointment of Father Peter Paul Lefevere, as coadjutor to Bishop Resé and administrator of Detroit. Father Lefevere was consecrated by Bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick in Philadelphia, November 21st, 1841. Clouded in mind, but always conscious of his dignity, Bishop Frederic Resé of Detroit lived on in retirement until December 27th, 1871. On the second Sunday of Advent, 1840, Bishop Rosati was appointed assistant to the Papal throne. Among the Cardinals whose acquaintance Bishop Rosati made at this time, was Cardinal Mastai Feretti, the future great Pope, Pius IX.

The Bishop's further visits and labors in behalf of his diocese we must here pass over in silence. In his letter of June 19th, 1841, to the Leopoldine Association of Vienna, the Bishop expresses his deep sense of obligation for the gift of 6,000 fl., a gift all the more acceptable at a time when he is sending twenty new missionaries into his extensive missionary field. "Every year we enlarge, under the blessing of the Almighty, the bounds of the ecclesiastical field requiring cultivation; every year we organize new parishes, every year we must erect new churches and new institutions for the training of those who are to increase the flock of Christ. This constant growth is caused not only by the frequent migration from Europe, and the other parts of America, to the states of Missouri, Arkansas and Illinois, but also by the conversions of Protestants, who return to the fold of Christ, and no less, by the great number of savages, whom we have recently won for the Faith. Our Missionaries have last year penetrated the Rocky Mountains, and founded new missions in these remote regions, which are watered by rivers that flow into the Pacific Ocean. Father De Smet, the Jesuit Missionary, alone, has converted more than 2,000 Indians to the Church."<sup>15</sup>

One of the great anxieties of Pope Gregory was the sad condition of religion in the negro-republic of Haiti. Bishop England's mission to President Boyer in 1835 had ended in failure. In one of Bishop Rosati's conversations with the Holy Father, the question of Haiti was broached and the Pope, realizing that the Bishop's wisdom, gentleness and thorough knowledge of the negro-character, eminently fitted him

---

<sup>15</sup> "Berichte der Leopoldinen Stiftung," Heft XV, pp. 23-25.

for the work of restoring ecclesiastical affairs in that republic to a normal condition, asked him whether he would be willing to accept a mission as Delegate Apostolic to Haiti. Bishop Rosati had but one objection: the bereavement of St. Louis of its bishop. But if a coadjutor were given him, he would be ready at once to go to Haiti. "Well," answered the Pope, "If you know a good priest, whom you would like to have for your Coadjutor, mention him, and I will appoint him at once." Then the remembrance of what he had seen and heard of the Vicar General of Philadelphia, Peter Richard Kenrick, arose in the Bishop's mind, and the words that he had then set down in his Diary came back to him: "Most Holy Father, I desire that You give me as my Coadjutor, the Very Reverend Peter Richard Kenrick, Vicar General of Philadelphia." The Pope readily acquiesced: yet a doubt arose in the mind of the Bishop. "Most Holy Father, I have been grievously disappointed on a former similar occasion. The Coadjutor You intended for me some years since, Father John Timon, refused to accept the burden: I fear, that Father Kenrick may do likewise, unless Your Holiness oblige him under obedience to accept."

That the Holy Father acted upon Bishop Rosati's request is evidenced by the letter Bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick wrote from Philadelphia to Bishop Rosati in Rome, under date of June 4th, 1841: "The positive wishes of His Holiness have, I believe, received my brother's full acquiescence."<sup>16</sup>

Bishop Rosati set sail for New York in the Fall of the year, and proceeding to Philadelphia, whilst Father Lutz started for St. Louis, he consecrated Peter Richard Kenrick under the title Bishop of Drasa and Coadjutor of St. Louis. This solemn act occurred in the parish of the new Bishop, St. Mary's: The assistant bishops were Francis Patrick Kenrick, and the newly consecrated Peter Paul Lefevere. The day of consecration was St. Andrew's day, November 30th, 1841.

In the joy of his heart at having gained for his diocese "a man, whose apostolic zeal had been so conspicuous, and to whose merits all the prelates of the American Church had on several occasions given honorable testimony," announced the fact in His Pastoral Letter to the Clergy and the Faithful of his diocese, expressing the hope that he would have Bishop Kenrick as his constant companion in life, and that "having received our last breath, he will continue to be Your Father for a long succession of years."<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Kenrick, F. P., to Rosati, quoted by Van der Sanden in his *M. S. Sketch of St. Louis Archdiocese*.

<sup>17</sup> Pastoral Letter of Bishop Rosati, addressed to the Clergy and the Faithful of his Diocese.

After the consecration Bishop Rosati prepared himself for his mission to Haity. He was received with all kindness by President Boyer and his advisers. The Delegate's negotiations for a Concordat were successfully concluded, and after confirming a large number of the faithful on the Island, Bishop Rosati set out for Rome on February 22nd, 1843, in a French vessel of war, to make his report to Pope Gregory XVI. All the good results of his mission were destroyed by one of those periodical revolutions that have proved the curse of the island. President Boyer was defeated and exiled. The thought of returning to his diocese was now uppermost in the Bishop's mind. He departed for Paris in the company of Cardinal Joachim Pecci, the future Leo XIII. The Cardinal was on his way to Brussels as Nuncio. He was delighted with the Bishop's unaffected piety, kindliness of manner and sincere affection for the Holy Father. His words were: "I have never met with a Bishop whom I considered such a holy man, as the first Bishop of St. Louis."

Whilst then Bishop Rosati was straining every nerve to bring peace and salvation to a distracted people, the newly consecrated Coadjutor Bishop, in company with his friend Michael O'Connor, was wending his way to Pittsburg and the Ohio River and thence, bidding farewell to his company, pressed on to his new field of labor in St. Louis. We have the testimony of Archbishop Ryan, to the fact that Bishop Kenrick on his way to St. Louis, stopped off at Cape Girardeau and kept the Feast of Christmas with the Lazarist Fathers of that place. He entered St. Louis on December 28th, 1841, quietly, unobtrusively, as the entire course of his life had been.



+ Petrus Recandus, Epi. Drasensis  
et Co-adjutor Epi. S. Ludovicæ.



## CHAPTER 2

### BISHOP PETER RICHARD KENRICK OF ST. LOUIS

"Noli irritare leonen," was the motto the kind and gentle Coadjutor Bishop of St. Louis assumed at his consecration. There were indeed, certain qualities of character and even of outward appearance, that reminded one of the lion; his never-failing sense of dignity, his firmness of will and courage in dangerous situations, his disregard of obstacles and contempt for enemies and detractors, and his noble ideal of life and action, which was as far above the petty meanness of this world as the stars are above the dust and turmoil of this earth of ours. Yet these qualities of the lion were tempered by those of the lamb. There was a gentleness and consideration in his manner that won the affection of those that came near him. Strong, yet pliant, where reason swayed, ruggedly honest and fearless of consequences, he could be moved to change a decision, if the better reason were offered. Strong, but not stubborn, he was tenacious of his convictions amid contention and obloquy; yet, when the voice of authority emerged from the noise of contending factions, he bowed in humble submission to the truth of God. Such was the Coadjutor and successor of Bishop Rosati in the diocese of St. Louis, Peter Richard Kenrick.

Ireland, "the martyr-island," that has given so many bishops to the American Church, was the home of our own Peter Richard. He was born in Dublin on the 17th day of August 1806, and made his preparatory studies in the schools of his native city, and under his uncle, the Rev. Richard Kenrick, pastor of the Church of St. Nicholas de Lyra. Young Kenrick had a brother, Francis Patrick Kenrick, a student in the Urban College in Rome, who was in the course of time to attain the high station of Bishop of Philadelphia and Archbishop of Baltimore. Among his early friends the great Irish poet, James Clarence Mangan, seems to have made the deepest impression on his mind. The Author of "My Dark Rosaleen," and "Twenty Golden Years Ago" was frequently quoted by the Bishop all through life. After completing his classical studies the youthful aspirant for the priesthood entered St. Patrick's Royal College of Maymooth. On March 6th, 1832, he was ordained priest in the college chapel by Archbishop Murray of Dublin. After exercising the sacred ministry, first at the Cathedral of Dublin, and then in the Parish of Rathmines, Father Kenrick received an urgent invitation from his brother, the Coadjutor Bishop of Philadelphia, to join him in his labors for the western church. Archbishop Murray gave his consent, and in October, 1833, Peter Richard Kenrick arrived in his brother's Episcopal City. Appointed Pastor of the Cathedral,

Father Kenrick became President of the Seminary and Vicar-General of the Diocese. He attended the Third Provincial Council of Baltimore as theologian to the saintly Bishop Bruté of Vincennes. The energetic Vicar-General assumed in addition to his other duties, the editorship of the "*Catholic Herald*," a weekly publication appearing in Philadelphia. The amount of literary work Father Kenrick did for the "*Catholic Herald*" was unquestionably very great, and might have satisfied the most active and tireless mind. But it is usually the busiest men that readily find time and energy for extra work that is imposed upon them by the exigencies of the hour or the secret spell of a sudden inspiration. It was during the seven years of his missionary life in Philadelphia that Peter Richard Kenrick composed the solid works of genuine peity and scholarship, that placed him among the chief writers of American Church, namely "*The Validity of Anglican Ordinations*" (Philadelphia 1841) "*New Month of Mary*" and, "*History of the Holy House of Loretto*."<sup>1</sup>

Kenrick's "*The Validity of Anglican Ordinations*" is remarkable, not only for its being the first comprehensive treatise on the subject published in America, but even more so for the wonderful historical grasp with which he summed up the various branches of the argument and combined them into one irresistible onslaught on the Anglican position. Pope Leo XIII dealt with the matter chiefly from the doctrinal point of the sacramental validity: Father Kenrick from the historical grounds upon which the Anglican Church based its claim. Both came to the same conclusion: the Anglican ordinations were invalid. When we recall to mind that Father Kenrick's treatise was published in 1841, we may well feel surprised at the clearness of vision and fullness of learning of the still youthful controversialist. Father Kenrick's book made quite a stir among the Anglican clergy. In 1844 a certain Hugh Davy Evans published in Baltimore a book, entitled *Essays to Prove the Validity of Anglican Ordinations; in answer to the Right Reverend Peter Richard Kenrick, R.C. Bishop of St. Louis, by a Layman*, and in 1846 John Fuller Russell followed with *Anglican Ordinations Valid*. A refutation of certain statements in the second and third chapters of *The Validity of Anglican Ordinations, examined*, by the Very Reverend Peter Richard Kenrick, V.G. by John Fuller Russell, London, Masters, 1846. "Bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick sent these books to his brother in St. Louis with the request:

"I am hoping that, after you have read this (work) of your adversary, you will make a new edition of your own work, which is of great value; especially that you will correct the error, which I pointed out to you, of a quotation that is incomplete."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O'Shea, John J., "The Two Archbishops Kenrick," p. 268 ss.

<sup>2</sup> Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence, p. 231.

A second edition of *The Validity of Anglican Orders Examined* came out in 1848. The *Cursus Completus Theologicus* of Abbe Mignet, Vol. 25, p. 61 s. contains a chapter of Father Kenrick's treatise. In the course of time the work met with unmerited neglect and has become very rare. John J. O'Shea in his "*The two Archbishops Kenrick*" reprints the leading arguments of the book.<sup>3</sup>

"*The Holy House of Loretto*" is intended to be an examination of the historical evidence of its miraculous translation from Nazareth to the Adriatic Shore. As the history of the Holy House was well known in America, the authorities however, on which the history rests, remained almost unknown, the author undertook the present work, stating that the subject was not a matter of divine Faith, but only of historical credibility. Many books have been written since Kenrick's day concerning the wonderful event, or if you will, this most attractive legend; but for sanity of argument, clearness of statement and limpid flow of language, Kenrick's "*Holy House of Loretto*," the "*House of Our Lady on the Adriatic Shore*" still holds the palm. Several editions of the book appeared, the last one we know of in 1876. An Italian translation by a gentleman of rank appeared about 1847, and a German one by Canon Salzbacher, printed in beautiful type, in 1854.

Concerning the third beautiful fruit of Father Kenrick's missionary days, "*The New Month of Mary*" 1840, we are glad to state that the fragrance and life of it is still a cherished possession of our Catholic people. You may still hear it said on all sides: The best book for May devotions is Kenrick's "*New Month of Mary*." Father Faber republished it in England; in America it has never gone out of use. It was greatly instrumental in promoting the devotion of the Month of our Blessed Lady in English-speaking countries.

From these three remarkable literary works of his earlier days it would appear that Peter Richard Kenrick was, indeed, worthy of high honors in the Church, but might not be fitted for the place in which the choice of Bishop Rosati placed him. A quiet studious professor and writer of books did not seem to meet the hard practical requirements of western clerical life. For a time appearances went far to prove the fact. Bishop Kenrick received a cold reception from the old French priests, and his first attempts to regulate the financial affairs of the diocese met with passive resistance on the part of the people of the city. There was a debt of \$58,000.00 incurred by Bishop Rosati in building his Cathedral, and in establishing necessary institutions. Aid had come from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, in Lyons, and from the Leopoldine Society of the Austrian Empire. But there were so many financial hollows to be filled up, and so many new demands arising, that the diocesan debt grew apace. We have read two

---

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit., p. 422-479.

letters written by Bishop Kenrick to Bishop Rosati recounting to him in the most insistent manner what sums were due, and had to be paid, and earnestly requesting him not to spend any part of the money he should obtain at Rome and Paris and Vienna, but to send all amounts for the payment of his most pressing debts.<sup>4</sup>

St. Louis itself was not as pleasant a place to dwell in as the Bishop had found Philadelphia. The city proper only extended westward as far as Seventh Street. Beyond that line there were some scattering residences, gutters, and prairie. In the neighborhood of Washington Avenue, there were, west of the boundary of Seventh Street for a little distance around, more buildings than in any other quarter in that direction, as the St. Louis College was situated in that neighborhood; but on Chestnut and Market Streets, and all South Broadway were gutters and ponds—and then broken ridges and prairie beyond Seventh Street to the west. To the north the city extended to Middle Street, and to the south, just below the Convent of the Sacred Heart. Outside of these limits, north and south, the residences were scattering, and the population inconsiderable. The population of the city was 16,187.<sup>5</sup> At the close of 1841 it had grown to about 20,000, half of the population being Catholic, of French, English, Irish and German descent. The French and English-speaking Catholics, the great majority of whom were Irish immigrants, worshipped at the Cathedral. The German Catholics attended services in St. Mary's Chapel, the former St. Louis College, where Father Fischer continued the good work of Father Lutz, and at the Jesuit Chapel of St. Aloysius, near the University.<sup>6</sup> The diocese of St. Louis, at the coming of Bishop Kenrick, embraced the states of Missouri, Arkansas, the western portion of Illinois, and the territories now constituting Kansas, Nebraska, Indian Territory, Oklahoma, with all the wilderness east of the Rocky Mountains. The diocese contained 65 churches and chapels and 74 priests, and had several Indian missions, one of them on the western slopes of the Rockies.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Edwards' "Great West," p. 406, on the unsanitary condition of St. Louis streets and alleys as late as 1848.

<sup>6</sup> Holweck, F. G., "Public Places of Worship in St. Louis before Palm Sunday 1843," in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. IV, pp. 6 and 7.

<sup>7</sup> Those interested in the growth of the Catholic Church in America will enjoy the following quotation from "The Catholic Luminary," printed in 1840 in Ireland: "The number of churches or chapels in the Catholic Diocese of St. Louis, in the West of the United States of America, is not less than 43, many of which would do credit to the handsomest cities of Europe, and eleven others have been begun, but cannot yet be finished for want of means. This diocese comprises the states of Arkansas, Missouri, part of that of Illinois, and the western territory as far as the frontiers of Mexico. The clergy consists of 68 priests—24 of the Society of Jesus, 20 to the Mission, and 24 to the secular clergy of the diocese. In the several

From a letter written by Francis Patrick to his brother Peter Richard, January 10th, 1842, we may gather some of the thorns in the crown of the Coadjutor Bishop:

"I am pleased to know that you reached St. Louis safely, but sorry to learn that sadness mingles with your joy. Indeed it is the all-wise arrangement of Providence to keep us humble in the very enjoyment of success. As to the burden of debt, it will not appear so great, if you consider what has been done, and that almost without aid of the faithful: though just now it may seem to press very heavily, when many things are out of harmony, by reason of the absence of the good Bishop: that some buildings were destroyed by fire; that a certain German whom the Bishop had kindly recommended by going his security, had absconded, and that a collector had failed to turn in the money which he received. All this the Bishop told me before I received your letter; and he expressed much regret that you have to take up the administration of the diocese in the midst of these difficulties. Moreover, it will be his whole care to help you in any way that he can; and I, if I can do anything, will not be wanting. Have courage therefore; and if the burden becomes very heavy, let me know of your difficulties."<sup>8</sup>

To cheer up his brother of St. Louis the Bishop of Philadelphia wrote: "You know that Bishop Rosati is sure to return to his see as soon as he has settled the affairs of the Republic of Haiti. He has told me that he expects to leave the Island after Easter. Therefore, it is very probable that you will be relieved soon of a most responsible care."<sup>9</sup> And again: "Do not worry so much about the Bishop: think more kindly of his temporal affairs and the burden of his debts." And once more on Dec. 21: "It is evident that he, (Rosati) is troubled in mind. I think, therefore, that unwelcome communications are to be sent to him not without some words to console him. I fear your straightforward way of bringing to his notice the condition of things has made him sad."<sup>10</sup>

But Bishop Kenrick knew well the saying of Virgil: "*Labor omnia vincit*," and determined to win his way. First, he set his own house aright by appointing Father Lutz, who had been specially recommended to him as one, who, on account of his disturbed imagination, merits great charity, as his secretary: he sent Father Fontbonne from the Cathedral to Carondelet, and placed Father George Hamilton, as the best

---

establishments of education or charity, entrusted to clergymen or nuns, there are more than 500 boys and girls; 29 male and female orphans are supported and educated in asylums of charity. The hospital of St. Louis lodges and feeds 1,362 infirm, poor persons, and receives annually more than 560 sick."

<sup>8</sup> Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence, pp. 138 and 139.

<sup>9</sup> Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence, p. 144.

<sup>10</sup> Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence, pp. 151-158.

English speaker, in the Cathedral pulpit. Father Saulnier is sent to French Village in Illinois and eventually to New Madrid, and Father P. R. Donnelly to Alton, whilst Father Ambrose Heim is transferred to English Settlement in Illinois. In writing to Bishop Rosati in Rome he emphasises necessity of priests who speak the languages of the Catholic immigrants, saying with great stress: "We want English and German priests." He gave dimissorial letters to Revs. J. Conway, J. Healy and H. Meinkmann. Within the year 1843 he ordained nine priests; on May 21st, Rev. James Tiernan, C.M.; on May 30th, Rev. Adrian Hoecken, S.J.; on August 21st, Rev. Joseph Kuenster and Rev. Patrick McCabe, both of the diocese; Rev. Thomas Cusack, also for the diocese and Rev. Alphonse Montuori, C.M. and Rev. John Larkin, C.M. On December 8th, Rev. Michael Carroll, for the diocese; on December 21st, Rev. Maurice van der Eycke, S.J."

The statistics for the year 1842 are as follows:

Churches with resident priest 39; Chapels 6; Missions with churches, about 36; Stations 50; Bishops 2; Secular Priests, 27; Lazarist Fathers, 21; Jesuit Fathers 28. Total, 80.

Ecclesiastical Seminaries, 4; Clerical Students 30; College 3; Academies for girls, 10; Schools, 5; Charitable Institutions, 7; Catholic Population, 100,000.<sup>11</sup>

In April the sum of 5,000 fl. equal to 2300 dollars arrived from the Leopoldine Association of Vienna, Austria. The Bishop at once wrote his letter of thanks, and assured Archbishop Milde of having devoted a part of this sum to the use of the German Catholics, and of his intention to devote the rest for their good also."<sup>12</sup> Bishop Rosati wrote with expressions of deepest gratitude to the Archbishop of Vienna saying: "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith of Lyons, and the Leopoldine Society are almost the only supports upon whom I can rely."<sup>13</sup>

Bishop Joseph Rosati's earthly days were now drawing to a close. Father Hercules Brassac, who kept a watchful eye on all the ecclesiastical doings at Paris and Rome wrote to Bishop Purcell on April 5th, 1842: "Bishop Rosati has returned from Haiti quite satisfied with his mission there. He returns to Rome in a few days." Again under date of December 30th, he says: "Bishop Rosati is still at Rome, but will be here (Paris) ere long. I may have to go to Haiti very shortly." On February 22nd, 1843: he communicates the news to Bishop Purcell; "That Bishop Rosati has insisted so pressingly on his (Brassac) going with him to San Domingo, that he has consented to do so." On April 10th, comes

<sup>11</sup> Annual Statement of Chancery.

<sup>12</sup> "Berichte der Leopoldinen Stiftung," Heft XVI, pp. 43-46.

<sup>13</sup> Berichte, Heft XVI, pp. 41 and 43.

the news that "Bishop Rosati is too sick to cross the ocean."<sup>14</sup> "There is no hope of recovery of the Bishop (Rosati), as I gather from the Report of Bishop Chabrat," wrote the Bishop of Philadelphia to his brother Peter Richard, "In consequence you must be prepared to bear the burden of government alone."<sup>15</sup> Bishop Joseph Rosati died at Rome on the 25th day of September 1843 in the 54th year of his age. "He was a prelate worthy of the brightest ages of the church, eminent for his ecclesiastical learning, as well as for piety, prudence, zeal, suavity of manners, humility, and all the virtues becoming his high station,"<sup>16</sup> as a St. Louis priest wrote of him immediately after having received the notice of his death. Though not gifted with the secret power to make all the golden streams turn towards him, he knew how to diffuse sparse favors of charity and of the world in the many places where they produced so much of golden fruits for eternity. Not worldly-wise, but wise in his childlike trust in Providence, he is one of the saintly men of whom the Church in the Mississippi Valley will forever be proud.

---

<sup>14</sup> Messmer, Archbishop S. G., Hercules Brassac's Correspondence, "Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, pp. 464, 467.

<sup>15</sup> Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence, p. 173.

<sup>16</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," December, 1843.

### CHAPTER 3

## THE CATHEDRAL PARISH OF ST. LOUIS

In his long and jubilant letter to Pope Gregory XVI, written on the 26th day of October 1834, Bishop Rosati gives the following description of the surroundings of the new Cathedral he had just consecrated with all the ceremonial pomp then possible: "The new Cathedral is alongside the residence of the Bishop, from which it is separated only by an alley eighteen feet wide. The secular priests residing in St. Louis and exercising the parochial ministry with the Bishop, live with him a kind of community life, with its rules, its regular exercises of piety, spiritual conferences, reading of Holy Scripture at table, etc. Their life is one of retirement from all useless relations with seculars, from whom they never accept any invitations either to dinner or to supper outside the house, so that they may always be ready for any calls. Their number is still inadequate to the needs, which in this city are harder to satisfy than elsewhere, because the population speaks three languages, French, English and German. A large number of German Catholics have come, and are continuing to come, to settle in the Diocese and the city of St. Louis. As a rule, they are very pious, industrious and they do honor to the religion which they profess by word and deed. It is, therefore, necessary to preach in these three languages; yet all the clergy employed in the service of the parish at present consists only of the Bishop, two priests and a cleric. From time to time a Jesuit comes from the College to preach in English; and on solemn feast days these Fathers come to help for pontifical functions, so that, with the further aid of altar boys vested in red cassocks and surplices, who fulfill the minor offices, the solemnities may be celebrated with proper dignity. On the west side of the Cathedral there is a beautiful piece of ground belonging to the church which might otherwise have been turned into a source of revenue; however, to obviate the inconvenience resulting from hiring houses so near the church, the Bishop has reserved this piece of property for the Orphan Asylum. The charity of the faithful is much interested in these children, of whom, after the outbreak of the cholera, twenty-five were gathered together and are raised in a small house; a fair held by the most respectable ladies of the city in view of the Orphanage has returned \$1,000, besides \$800 for the building of a new asylum. Providence will certainly do the rest. Building operations for this new Orphanage will commence next spring. Thus shall the infant Church of St. Louis follow, at least from afar, the examples given by the first churches of the world from the earliest Christian centuries in the particular care they took of the poor, the

orphans and the sick. These orphan boys housed near the Cathedral will be very useful as altar boys and will supply the want of clerics."<sup>1</sup>

The priests here mentioned were the Very Rev. Philip Borgna C.M. Vicar-General and Joseph Anthony Lutz; the cleric was Louis Tucker. Father Edmond Saulnier had his residence near the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Carondelet, or, as it was popularly known, "Vide Poche," a suburb of St. Louis. In 1835 the same clergymen were with Bishop Rosati at the Cathedral, but their duties had increased. "On Sunday," says the Directory for 1836, "besides the Highmass at 10 o'clock, at which there is an English and a French sermon alternately, there is mass and a sermon in the German language at 9 o'clock. After Vespers there is a meeting of the Confraternity of the Rosary."

The services rendered to the Cathedral by the Jesuits from the St. Louis College were more important than Bishop Rosati's words would seem to imply. From the opening of the College in 1829 until the opening of St. Francis Xavier Church, the Jesuits of St. Louis had no parochial standing. In fact there were under-currents among the secular clergy against the Jesuits having a parish church in the city. "These gentlemen," wrote Father Saulnier to Bishop Rosati "are going to have a church and they have spread a rumor in town that the English speaking people shall soon have an English priest there who will preach to them every Sunday. Beware!"<sup>2</sup>

Father Niel, the founder of St. Louis College, bravely seconds the former pastor of the Cathedral: "I hear a report, that the Jesuits are going to build a church. If this be true, and if you give them permission, you will incur the danger of preaching to empty pews in your Cathedral. You destroy the parish of St. Louis. Bishop Du Bourg, although half a Jesuit himself often told me at St. Louis that in the deed of the donation of the land where they build their college, he had made the condition, that they should have there a chapel only for their pupils, to the exclusion of the general public. Beware! You will create for yourself a lot of difficulties, if you permit them to have a church. I foresee the time, when the Cathedral will be deserted, when the only occupation of the Bishop in St. Louis shall be to give confirmation, and when he can have only two or three diocesan priests."<sup>3</sup>

These fears were based on the admitted fact that the Jesuits had better English preachers than those at the Cathedral, and would certainly attract the Irish and the American converts to their church near the College. Bishop Rosati, however, entertained no such fears, but made the best use of these talented and highly cultured priests as

---

1 Rosati to Pope Gregory XIV.

2 Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

3 Niel to Rosati, from Paris about 1820.

preachers and confessors in his Cathedral and as substitutes for the Cathedral clergy in the discharge of sick calls during the absence of the latter.

"In 1835 Fathers Verhaegen, Elet and Van de Velde," as Father Garraghan assures us, "were taking turns regularly as Cathedral preachers, while Father Smedts was hearing confessions weekly in the same church. The year following Father Elet was preaching in the Cathedral in English and Father Helias in German. The sermons of the Fathers sometimes drew large crowds, as in 1836, when people flocked to the Cathedral even from the outskirts of the city to attend an evening course, carrying lanterns with them, as no system of street lighting then existed.<sup>4</sup> Father Verhaegen, who at this period was residing at the Cathedral in the capacity of Administrator of the diocese, writes in reference to a sermon which he preached there on All Saints Day, 1840: "In the evening I preached on purgatory. More than 3,000 persons, so I am told came to hear me and many more had to go away, not being able to get into the church. If I could give my instructions in the evening, I believe they would, with God's grace, accomplish considerable good. A number of Protestants, have been to see me, asking for books to read and four of them are now being prepared to enter the Church."<sup>5</sup>

As late as 1840 the preaching at the St. Louis Cathedral was still partly in French. "French sermons," so Father Verhaegen informed Bishop Rosati, then in Europe, "are poorly attended, and religion suffers in consequence. If Monseigneur could bring back with him a good French preacher for his Cathedral, he would fill a great void. As to the English preaching, I cannot myself complain of my audience—but I cannot any longer conceal from you the fact that if, on my departure from the episcopal residence, some competent English or Irish priest does not replace me, religion will be very much the loser."<sup>6</sup>

Bishop Rosati had but words of praise for the valuable assistance given him at the Cathedral. "I sincerely applaud and highly value their exertions," he wrote in a letter to the press, in answer to the charge that the Jesuits were not doing their full duty to religion.

Bishop Rosati fully realized that the long hours spent in class day by day required a time of rest and recuperation; Father Verhaegen addressed Bishop Rosati on March 26th, 1831:

"Aware as you are of our willingness to render your Lordship every service in our power compatible with our occupations, I am sure you will appreciate the liberty I respectfully take to inform you, that we can manage to absent ourselves from the College only on those days

<sup>4</sup> *Litterae Annuae*, 1836.

<sup>5</sup> Verhaegen to Rosati, 1840. Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

<sup>6</sup> Verhaegen to Rosati, July 1840. Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

on which Your Lordship celebrates Mass in Pontificalibus, that is, according to our calculation, only eight or ten times a year. This engagement Rev. Father Superior (De Theux) makes with you after having inquired of us what each of us could do. To do more would be beyond our power.”<sup>7</sup>

In the Fall of 1836, a priest from the diocese of Boston, Father, Jamison, came to St. Louis to the great delight of everybody concerned. He had arrived whilst Bishop Rosati was on the confirmation trip in Ste. Genevieve, St. Francis and Perry Counties. The Bishop found Jamison at the episcopal residence, when he returned to St. Louis, October 27th, 1832, and incorporated him at once into the diocese for the English speaking members of the parish. As soon as Father Verhaegen, then President of St. Louis University, heard of this arrangement, he wrote to Bishop Rosati:

“Our Fathers told me that under present circumstances they would feel mortified to appear in pulpit before a congregation which must contribute to Dr. Jamison’s support and would not see him at his post. They, therefore, wish that Mr. Jamison should preach in the morning and they will gladly assist him in the great work of preaching as often as their services are required. You will, therefore, permit us, Monseigneur, to retire from the exercise of this function. Rest assured, that when circumstances later on shall demand that we take up our former post again, we shall do so with all our heart.”<sup>8</sup> But Father Jamison did not stay long. Conditions in the West did not suit his taste and he returned to the East (first to Cincinnati). The Jesuit Fathers again took the charge of preaching in English at the morning services, much against their wish. Again Father Verhaegen sought to have his subjects released from the duty of preaching in the Cathedral. “I believe it necessary for the welfare of our holy religion in St. Louis, that there be an American priest at the Cathedral to give consecutive instructions. This gentleman would make himself doubly useful by assuming the spiritual direction of the boarding-school of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, which more than any other external ministry weighs heavily on our shoulders. Deign, Monseigneur, to reflect on what I have just set down and to arrange things in such wise that those who are already overburdened at home may no longer have reason to complain because exterior functions of the ministry are imposed upon them.”<sup>9</sup>

During the absence of Bishop Rosati at the Council in Baltimore and on his trip to Italy, until Bishop Kenrick’s arrival, Father Ver-

---

<sup>7</sup> Verhaegen to Rosati, July 8, 1840. Cf. Holweck, “The Language-Question at the Old Cathedral of St. Louis” in “St. Louis Catholic Historical Review,” vol. II, pp. 4-17.

<sup>8</sup> Verhaegen to Rosati, November 14, 1836. Archives.

<sup>9</sup> Verhaegen to Rosati, August 4, 1839.

haegen was the Administrator of the diocese, with residence at the Cathedral rectory. One of the first acts of the Coadjutor was to remove Father Saulnier from Carondelet to French Village, Illinois, Father Joseph Fontbonne from the Cathedral to Carondelet, and Father George Hamilton, from Alton to the Cathedral. The French regime in the Church of St. Louis was now over, the rivalry between the Irish and the German elements had begun.

In 1842 Bishop Kenrick abolished French at the morning services altogether, fearing that the English-speaking members of the Cathedral congregation might be drawn entirely to the new College church, which was then in process of construction and in which the preaching was to be entirely in English. French sermons, however, continued to be given in the Cathedral in the afternoon after Vespers, but in the course of the forties these also were discontinued, and the language of the founders of St. Louis ceased to be heard from the Cathedral pulpit.

The French Fathers, Joseph Renaud and Benedict Roux were still retained at the Cathedral for the care of the old Creoles; the younger generation preferred the English language. 1845 Father Simon Paris, a native of France, but through his long missionary services in Arkansas, rather proficient in English, became Rector of the Cathedral, with Roux; Renaud, Ambrose Heim, Patrick O'Brien and John Higginbotham as assistants. Father Lutz had been appointed to St. Patrick's, as pastor.

In the year of grace 1845, the first "Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society" in America was established at the Cathedral. It was twelve years after the inauguration of this noble work for the poor, by Frederick Ozanam, a brilliant young lawyer at Paris, that Bryan Mullanphy, the son of John Mullanphy, just returned from his studies in Paris and full of enthusiasm for the achievements of the society in France, called together a few of the prominent Catholic laymen of St. Louis, and in the little school-house attached to the Cathedral,—a building destroyed in the great fire of 1849—established the first council of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in America. In the minutes of this meeting we read that Mr. Mullanphy presided; and the election of officers took place. Dr. M. L. Linton was elected President; Bryan Mullanphy, 1st Vice President; Dennis Galvin, 2nd Vice President; James McGuire Jr., Secretary, and Patrick Ryder, Treasurer. A committee was at once appointed to wait upon the Bishop, to acquaint him with the establishment of the Society and ask his approbation, which was gladly given. The next step was to gain affiliation with the General Council in Paris. Accordingly on the 11th day of December 1845 the application for aggregation was forwarded to France. The act of admission to the General Council was effected on February 2nd, 1846. Among the early members of the Cathedral Conference the Irish names predominated with the German in second place. The most prom-

inent are Bryan Mullanphy, Dr. M. L. Linton, John Amend, H. J. Spaunhorst, Patrick Fox, Joseph O'Neill and A. S. Heim, Francis Saler, Owen V. Timon.<sup>10</sup>

The name of Bryan Mullanphy needs no introduction to the people of St. Louis. Born to abundant wealth, educated in the best schools of America and Europe, he was in no way affected by pride or selfishness, but was filled with enthusiasm for all things Christian and charitable. He was an accomplished French scholar. His purse was ever open and his generosity unbounded. It was due to him that there were no financial ailments in the infant days of the Cathedral Council. He was the "Good Angel" of the young Society and regarded it with paternal kindness to the time of his death.<sup>11</sup>

Dr. M. L. Linton was a native of Nelson County, Kentucky born to an humble position in life. Hard work and much sacrifice enabled him to attend the Transylvania University from which he graduated as a Doctor of Medicine. Not content with this he afterwards continued his studies abroad at Paris and Edinburg. On his return to the United States he was invited to take a professor's chair in the St. Louis University. Dr. Linton became a Catholic in February 1841. He was assailed in a vicious pamphlet for taking this step. Dr. Linton's replies, written in a spirited style, and full of learning, were much admired even by those who did not approve of his conversion. In what was probably his last letter, dated May 14th, 1872, he gave thanks for his long acquaintance with the Jesuit Fathers. He closed it with the significant words: "I believe in the Catholic church—every article of her Creed, from the divinity of Christ to the infallibility of the Pope. I want a firm faith now, as the time of my going hence approaches."<sup>12</sup>

He established the St. Louis Medical and Surgical Journal in 1843, the first periodical of its kind west of the Mississippi.<sup>13</sup> Dr. Linton is the Author of "Outlines of Pathology," and of many able treatises on Medical subjects. Francis Saler, the President of the Society in 1856, was a native of the Austrian Tyrol, who became the favorite building contractor of the Catholic sisterhoods and the publisher of a German daily paper, the *Taegliche Chronik* (The daily Chronicle) and of a number of valuable books.

He was a staunch Catholic and a man of utmost generosity in the cause of religion and charity. Joan Amend, or "Papa Amend," as the older generation of Catholic Germans affectionately called him,

10 Cf. Schulte, Rev. Paul, "The Old Cathedral Conference of St. Vincent de Paul," in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. III, pp. 5-14.

11 Idem, ibidem.

12 Dr. Moses L. Linton died in 1872. His name is among the famous ones of Missouri Medical History.

13 "Catholic Cabinet," 1843, vol. I, No. 3.

was not a man of higher learning, but he had a full share of good common sense, and the ability to express himself clearly and forcibly, as a leader of men. He was chiefly instrumental in organizing the great association of German Catholic Societies of the United States which still lives on, after more than seventy years, as the Central Verein. For many years John Amend held the position of President of this strong Catholic organization.

Henry J. Spaunhorst, John Amend's successor, drifted into politics, without losing interest in the affairs of the Church and of Catholic Societies, rose to the position of State Senator from St. Louis. He was trying hard to have a bill passed by which the public school funds of Missouri should be available for the support of private and parochial schools, but desisted from his efforts at the urgent request of the defenders of our parochial school system, who feared, the state would demand supervision of the parochial schools, with all that it implied, as a *quid pro quo*.<sup>14</sup>

Patrick Fox is still well remembered as the Publisher of a number of books by St. Louisans, among them Bishop Kenrick's *Sacred Cosmogony*. It was to Father Ambrose Heim, that the Society owes much of its success. He was its first Spiritual Director. His expenditures for the poor were invariably the greatest. To relieve distress was the aim and object of his life. He died in 1854. On the simple marble slab erected over his grave, the terse epitaph is written: "Father Ambrose J. Heim, the priest of the poor." The Cathedral Conference was the only one established in St. Louis until 1858, when Dr. L. Sillman Ives, a convert to the Faith, delivered a stirring lecture in the Mercantile Library Hall, on the works of the Society and strongly urged the erection of more Conferences. As the result of his efforts St. Francis Xavier's Parish at once organized an independent Conference. This example was soon followed by others. Year after year witnessed the establishment of new Councils. At present our fair city boasts of seventy.

---

<sup>14</sup> Journal of the Constitutional Convention 1875, pp. 107 and 108.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY AND THE COLLEGE CHURCH

One of the last public acts of Bishop Rosati before his departure for Europe, was the laying of the corner-stone of the College Church dedicated to St. Francis Xavier. The church was completed early in 1843, and opened for divine service on Easter Sunday of that year. It was an imposing edifice in the classic style, and one of the favorite places of worship in the city, until in 1888 when it had to make room for the expanding commerce of St. Louis.<sup>1</sup>

It was rich in art-treasures brought or sent from Europe by Father De Smet, and the General of the Society of Jesus, Father Roothan. Under one of the altars reposed the body of St. Florentin which Father Van de Velde had brought from Rome in 1842. The first pastor of St. Xavier's Parish was Rev. John Shoenmakers. It was during his administration that the church was built. After the dedication, Father George A. Carrell, afterwards Bishop of Covington, was installed as pastor, to be succeeded in 1844 by Rev. Lucian Gleizal, in 1846 by Fathers Aelen and Arnold Damen, the latter of whom remained until 1857.

"The first parish school for girls in St. Louis was the one attached to St. Francis Xavier's. It was opened May 8th, 1843, by a group of Sisters of Charity, who had arrived in the city, on Low Sunday of that year, from their headquarters in Emmitsburg, Md. This Congregation of Sisters had been established in St. Louis since 1829, when they came to assume charge of the hospital founded through the munificence of Mr. John Mullanphy. Later, they took in hand the direction of St. Philomena's Orphan Asylum and Free School at Fifth and Walnut Streets in the Cathedral parish, and of St. Mary's Female Orphan Asylum on Biddle and Tenth Streets. St. Xavier's parish school for girls, first known as St. Vincent's Free School, was a success from the start. It opened in temporary quarters with one hundred and thirty pupils, as the new school building on Tenth Street was not ready for occupancy. In 1845 the average number of pupils in attendance was two hundred and eighty, the teaching staff consisting of five Sisters. Attached to St. Vincent's was a select or pay-school, the revenue of which went to the support of the Free School. Under the skilful direction of Sister Olympia, St. Vincent's Free

---

<sup>1</sup> The former site of St. Louis University is now occupied by business houses.

School, or "Sister Olympia's School," as it came to be known, became an important factor in the upbuilding of St. Louis Catholicity."<sup>2</sup>

"St. Xavier's parish school for boys was in a sense an outgrowth of the day-school department of St. Louis University. At first the day-scholars of the institution, as told above, were not admitted to the classical course, but were merely given instruction of a rather elementary kind in the usual branches of an English or mercantile education. Later, in 1842, they were admitted on an equal, or almost equal footing with the boarders to all the educational opportunities of the University. At the same time provision was to be made for poor boys unable to meet the expense of a collegiate education, as a circular issued from the University August 29th, 1842, informed the public: "It is not intended, however to exclude from the benefits of a good education such as are unable to defray the expense of a collegiate course.

Some of the gentlemen connected with the Institution will devote themselves to the gratuitous education of such children, and a spacious hall is now being fitted up for their accommodation within the precincts of the University.<sup>3</sup>

Father Arnold Damen was the Founder of the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy in St. Louis, as will be recounted in Chapter treating of that distinguished Sisterhood.

The succession of pastors at St. Francis Xavier's after Father Damen is as follows: John Gleizal to 1859, Cornelius Smarius to 1861, John O'Neill, to 1864; M. Corbett to 1870; John F. O'Neill to 1873; E. A. Higgins to 1875; John Condon to 1876; F. J. Ward to 1883; E. A. Higgins to 1885; M. Corbett to 1886; P. Boyce to August 5th, 1888, when Mass was said for the last time in the venerable temple of God before its destruction.<sup>4</sup>

The importance and wide celebrity of the Church of St. Francis Xavier was largely owing to the fact that it was the Church of Vice Province of the Society of Jesus and of the St. Louis University. The St. Louis College established by Father Van Quickenborne on the remnants of Bishop Du Bourg's College, having received a charter as a University from the Legislature of the State, December 28th, 1832<sup>5</sup>. The institution

<sup>2</sup> Garraghan, S.J., "Early Chapters in the History of St. Louis University," in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. V, p. 121. In the distribution of the John Thornton legacy the Archbishop remembered Sister Olympia's School with a share of \$1,000.

<sup>3</sup> Garraghan, l. c., pp. 121 and 122.

<sup>4</sup> Chancery Records.

<sup>5</sup> For the Charter see Hill, "History of St. Louis University," pp. 41-47.

did not rise at once to its full stature. Until 1842 it confined itself to two undergraduate courses, the classical and the mercantile. The classical course embraced five years of Latin, Greek, English, Mathematics and one year of Philosophy.

The first attempt to systematize the course of study and formulate definite requirements for graduation was made in 1837. "On May 6th, of that year the trustees of the University in meeting assembled appointed a committee, of which Rev. James Van de Velde was made chairman, with instructions considerably "to specify what studies and acquirements shall henceforth be deemed necessary for finishing the classical course, and being found qualified for taking the degree of A. B. in the St. Louis University."<sup>6</sup> The report, offered by the committee on the eighth of the following December was amended and recommitted with instructions to report also on the conditions to be prescribed for obtaining the degree of A. M. The report, as finally adopted by the board of trustees on July 28th, 1838, provided: "First: that the classical course shall comprehend a competent knowledge of the Greek, Latin, and English languages; of Geography, use of globes, ancient and modern history, logic and the principles of moral philosophy, including ethics and metaphysics; of rhetoric and mathematics, including arithmetic, algebra, plane and solid geometry, trigonometry, surveying, mensuration, conic sections and the principles of natural philosophy."<sup>7</sup>

In the Autumn of 1842 the Medical faculty was inaugurated in the University, in a building erected for the purpose on Washington Avenue west of Tenth Street. The list of Professors contained such eminent names as Dr. Daniel Brainard, Moses L. Linton and Charles Alexander Pope. In 1850, John O'Fallon, father-in-law of Dr. Pope, erected the stately building on Seventh and Myrtle Streets, at a cost of \$80,000, in which the Medical Department of the St. Louis University was housed. The Museum and the collection of surgical instruments cost at least \$30,000. Thus the St. Louis University was placed in possession of unequalled facilities for medical instruction of the highest order. In 1855, the connection between the University and its Medical School was severed by mutual consent.

"A Law Department was opened in the fall of 1843 with a matriculation of eighteen students. At its head was Judge Richard Aylett Buckner of Kentucky, a man of high legal attainments and a conspicuous figure in the national politics of his day. He was the supreme controlling and vitalizing influence of the St. Louis University Law School during

---

<sup>6</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Idem, *ibidem*, pp. 56 and 57.

the three years that he presided over it and when he died, December 8th, 1847, the school passed away with him."<sup>8</sup>

Father P. J. Verhaegen, the first President of St. Louis University, on March 24th, 1836 was made Superior of the Jesuit Mission in Missouri. Through his initiative the Superior of the Mission, even after the Mission became a Vice-Province and finally a Province of the Society of Jesus, no longer resided at Florissant the Mother-house, but at the University, as being more centrally located. The number of members under Father Verhaegen was thirty-seven. Father J. A. Elet became President of the University.

Under Father Verhaegen's administration a large tract of land 300 acres on Bellefontaine Road, the North-Broadway of today, in the region still called College Hill, was bought, for the purpose of establishing on it, far from the noise and dust of the city, their institution of learning and piety. Plans for the new building were made and work was begun, when proceedings were stopped temporarily by the death of the contractor, then postponed to more favorable time, and finally abandoned. In the course of time this land became very valuable, and was laid out as a new addition to the city, and the lots sold at a handsome price. The College Farm, as it was called, must have been a very beautiful sight. Edmond Flagg, who visited St. Louis and its vicinity in 1838, was delighted with its appearance:

"By far the most delightful drive in the vicinity of St. Louis is that of four or five miles in its northern suburbs, along the river bottoms. The road, emerging from the streets of the city through one of its finest sections and leaving the "Big Mound" upon the right, sweeps off for several miles upon a succession of broad plateaus, rolling up from the water's edge. To the left lies an extensive range of heights, surmounted by ancient mounds and crowned with groves of the shrub-oak which afford a delightful shade to the road running below. Along this elevated ride beautiful country-seats with graceful piazzas and green Venetian blinds are caught from time to time glancing through the shrubbery; while to the right, smooth meadows, spread themselves away to the heavy belt of forest which margins the Mississippi. Among these pleasant villas the little white farm-cottage, formerly the residence of Mr. Clark, beneath the hills, surrounded by the broad leaved catalpa, the willow, the acacia, and other ornamental trees, presents perhaps, the rarest instance of natural beauty adorned by refined taste. A visit to this delightful spot during my stay in St. Louis informed me of the fact that, within as well as abroad, the hand of education and

---

<sup>8</sup> Garraghan, "Early Chapters," in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. V, p. 100.

refinement had not been idle. Paintings, busts, medalions, Indian curiosities, etc., tastefully arranged around the walls and shelves of an elegant library, presented a feast to the visitor as rare in the Far West as it is agreeable to a cultivated mind. Near the cottage is the intended site of the building of the St. Louis Catholic University, a lofty and commanding spot.”<sup>9</sup>

From 1837 to 1847 the College Farm served as a place of rest and recreation for the Jesuit Fathers and scholastics. One of the rooms in the former Clarke Mansion was converted into a chapel named for St. Francis Xavier, where Sunday services were held for the Catholic men and women employed on the farm or in the laundry, and even for residents of the neighborhood. Father James Busschotts was the first priest to reside at the Farm, he was followed by Father John Schoenmakers, who remained in the position until 1847.

At a later date St. Thomas Church was built by the Fathers on College Street, which in a manner formed the nucleus of the present parish of the Holy Name, in Lowell or North St. Louis.

The progress of the collegiate department was slow but steady; about one-half of the students coming from Louisiana. In 1839, in spite of the fact that the Jesuits had started a College in Grand Coteau, the number of students at the University had increased, so that additional class-rooms had to be provided.

---

<sup>9</sup> Flagg, “The Far West” in “Early Western Travels,” vol. 26, pp. 258 and 259.



PART TWO

---

THE DIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

BOOK III

*Peter Richard Kenrick, Bishop of St. Louis*



## PART II

### BOOK III

#### CHAPTER 1

#### BISHOP KENRICK AND THE LEOPOLDINE SOCIETY

The year 1843 was a rather tempestuous one for the two great missionary Associations of Europe, the Society of the Propagation of the Faith of Lyons, France, and the Leopoldine Society of Vienna, Austria. Complaints were coming in from many missionaries in America that the German Catholics, who, with the Irish, formed the main body of the rising Church in the United States, were neglected by the bishops and deprived of their fair share of financial support from Europe. As the Society for the Propagation of the Faith derived a large part of its income from the Kingdom of Bavaria and some of the other German States, there was danger that, through a defection of the German associates from the French Society, the resources of the Society would be greatly diminished, whilst a mass of funds would eventually be put into the hands of the Germans of the United States. The Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith accordingly wrote to Bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick of Philadelphia to use his influence in silencing these complaints.

“They report to us from Munich that the Branch of the Work (for the Propagation of the Faith) in Bavaria has received numerous complaints from German missionaries in the United States. These complaints unite in saying that, while there are many Germans in America, the Bishops, in one accord, disregard their needs; that churches built by German congregations are left without aid from the prelates; that even donations made by Germans in Europe, destined for special purposes, are not available to compatriots in America; that there is need of a much greater number of German priests in America, but that it is the aim of the Bishops to oppose everything generally that concerns the German people; that even in the Council of Baltimore an ordinance which was to have been favorable to this people, was finally cut out. They add that the King of Bavaria may be informed personally of these things, that his will is very strong and effective, and that, if these conditions come to his notice, he will interdict all communication between the associates of his kingdom and the Central Council of Lyons. They

close by requesting us to appeal to the Bishops of the United States, asking that the faithful of German nationality may be treated fairly, as other nations are. That is all that they say, and their protest is serious.”<sup>1</sup>

Similar complaints had been made to the Leopoldine Society of the Austrian Empire, which had up to this time aided the dioceses of the United States to an extent of about 700,000 fls., or about \$280,000. of which sum Bishop Rosati had received, directly or indirectly, the sum of 44,000 fl. - \$17,600.00. Investigations were instituted by both organizations, the outcome of which was not divulged:<sup>2</sup> but from this time on there appears a stronger anxiety about the spiritual welfare of the German Catholic immigrants than had been shown before. The complaints were overdrawn, no doubt: but the cry for justice certainly found a more sympathetic hearing.

Bishop Kenrick was the very soul of honor. On November 9th, 1843 he wrote to Archbishop Milde, the President of the Leopoldine Society of Vienna:

“I take the liberty of informing your Grace concerning the needs of the German Catholics of the Diocese of St. Louis and especially of this city, the number of whom has now risen to 6000. No serious attempt has so far been made to provide a church, exclusively for the use of the German Catholics, but they have been obliged until now, to attend divine service in the church which belongs to the French and American Catholics. That they are not altogether neglected will appear from the following report, which will show that opportunity to attend public worship has always been offered to them.

1. In the Cathedral, where two German priests are stationed, one of whom is assigned to them and holds divine service for them every Sunday and Holyday of obligation at 8 o'clock with sermon in their language.

2. In the chapel of St. Aloysius, near the University, which is attended by the Jesuit Fathers.

3. In the chapel of the Seminary, dedicated to the Blessed Trinity, where a German priest of the Congregation of the Mission preaches in German every Sunday and Holyday at an early hour.

“Bishop Rosati of Blessed Memory, had long desired to erect a large church for the exclusive use of the German portion of his diocese

---

<sup>1</sup> Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence.

<sup>2</sup> Canon Joseph Salzbacher of St. Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna, was sent over by the Leopoldine Society in 1842. His book of “Travels in North America” appeared in Vienna in 1845. It is fair in its judgments and very valuable as a source-book on our early Catholic days in the West. The Diocese of St. Louis is treated pp. 213-223.

in this city, and, if no practical effort has so far been made, to acquire a plot of ground whereon to realize this wish, it must be ascribed to circumstances over which he had no control, certainly not to any lack of zeal to attain this worthy object. Although the general population of St. Louis has increased with extraordinary rapidity within the last few years, yet in this regard no single nationality can compare with the Germans as far as number of immigrants is concerned. Four years ago, when the German Catholics were not as yet so numerous, the Bishop bought a beautifully located piece of ground, with the intention of building thereon a German church. In view however, of the fact that the place seemed to be at too great a distance from those parts of the city in which the Germans dwelt, it appeared advisable to relinquish the plan or at least to postpone its execution.

“On coming here, towards the end of 1841, I found that the erection of a German church was an absolute necessity; still, however crying the need was, I had no means to remedy matters. No diocese in the United States is more richly endowed with religious institutions, and few, if any, can boast of a grander cathedral, than the diocese of St. Louis. All this was the work of Bishop Rosati; who in all these splendid and charitable undertakings, was forced by circumstances to accept personal responsibility for the cost of these institutions and especially of the cathedral. In consequence of this, I found at my coming here, a debt of \$60,000.00, most of it at a high rate of interest. It therefore seemed utterly impossible to buy a new lot for the necessary church-building, and my first plan was to await a more favorable time. But I began to fear, that it would soon become impossible, and therefore, I all the more willingly acceded to the request of the Vice-Provincial of the Jesuits in Missouri, to entrust him with the erection of a German church. I considered that, if the purpose could be attained more easily through others, than through me, I should gladly let the good work go on. But I was mistaken; after a few months of waiting, I now see myself disappointed.

“The Jesuits had, through the erection of a large and costly church, which they recently opened for public services, incurred a heavy debt, so that they would not be able, for a long time, to enter upon any new venture. Accordingly, I resolved not to let the year pass by without accomplishing something in the matter of the German church, especially as Divine Providence moved a French lady of this city to donate to me her half of a lot, which she owned in common with her brother, as a suitable site for a church.

“This generous deed induced me to buy her brother's part also, at the price of \$2500.00. For this amount I am personally responsible.

Upon this first piece of ground we have built a church, which will be dedicated to Our Lady of Victories.

"The building is cruciform, and can, if circumstances should demand it, be enlarged so as to form one of the largest and most beautiful churches of the city. The cost of the present building is about \$8000.00, \$6000.00 of which sum have already been expended. By way of subscription, we have realized only \$1000.00; I myself have given \$1000.00, so that a debt of \$4000.00 rests upon the building, in addition to the \$2500.00, which I still owe for the half lot. Yet, before the church can be opened for public services, another outlay of \$2000.00 will be necessary. As it would be unreasonable in me to increase my obligations at the present moment, I am constrained to suspend work on the building, which is so near completion.

"The German Catholics, for the most part, belong to the working classes, and feel all too keenly the pressure of hard times, to give any hope of assistance. Under such circumstances I considered it my duty to make an appeal to the Leopoldine Society, and I do so all the more hopefully, as I am conscious of having spent in the cause of the German Catholics, a few thousand dollars above the sum I have received for them from Your Society."<sup>3</sup>

Bishop Kenrick, in conclusion promised to devote the entire allotment that may be made next year, to their use. His petition was not in vain.

Full of gratitude for favors received Bishop Kenrick wrote to the Archbishop of Vienna, from St. Louis, August 29, 1844:

"I have received your Grace's letter containing the pleasant news that, through the charitable Leopoldine Society, 3000 fl. have been assigned to me for the benefit of the church for the Germans erected in this city. Shortly afterward, I received through Messrs. Faber and Bienwirth of New York the sum of \$1450. According to the wish of Your Grace I have devoted the entire amount for the use of the German church, cancelling a part of the debt of \$6000, still resting on the property, and buying the various articles needed for divine service. The church is now completed and will be dedicated in honor of Our Lady of Victories: the solemn consecration shall be postponed until I can extend the building to the form of a cross as planned.

"Another church, also for the use of the Germans, under the title of St. Joseph, was begun by the Jesuit Fathers in the beginning of April, on the opposite side of the city. The cornerstone was laid with great solemnity. Accordingly, the Germans of St. Louis, whose number already exceeds 6000 souls, will have two fine churches in the city,

---

<sup>3</sup> "Berichte der Leopoldinen Stiftung," Heft XVII, pp. 19-23. The original was in English; it is here re-translated by me from the German.

for which I am very grateful to God, because I realize that through them, spiritual wants can be satisfied in the most desirable manner.”<sup>4</sup>

In answer to Archbishop Milde's request for a detailed account of the diocese, Bishop Kenrick wrote to Vienna on December 10, 1844:

“The diocese of St. Louis which comprises the state of Missouri is one of the largest in the United States, and has, together with the Indian Territory to the West, a vast, almost boundless extent. The Catholic population is estimated at 50,000 souls, of whom at least one third are emigrants from various parts of Germany. This population is unequally dispersed over the state. The larger portion is found in the cities, or in close proximity to the cities, along the banks of the Mississippi and Missouri. Prior to the year 1843 the diocese was still larger: for the entire state of Arkansas, (now a separate diocese) and the western portion of the state of Illinois, formed a part of it. The latter territory is now a part of the diocese of Chicago, which comprises the entire state of Illinois. The circumstances and the relatively small number of priests at my disposal must account for it, that we know very little about the interior of the state of Missouri; But I know for a certainty that many Catholics have scattered throughout its extent. In spite of my earnest desire I did not find it possible so far, to send missionaries to explore this part of my diocese.

“St. Louis is the chief city of the state, increasing its population more rapidly than any other city in America. Its population is now between 35,000 and 40,000 souls, of whom one half or at least two-fifths profess the Catholic religion.

“The entire German Catholic population of the city can be set at 7000 souls; the rest is composed of French and English-speaking people, the latter class being for the most part, immigrants from Ireland. As no city of the United States enjoys greater opportunities for the practice of the Catholic religion, so there is none that expresses Catholic life and Catholic character better than St. Louis. Besides the Cathedral, a very beautiful building, which will long remain a memorial of the zeal and the pious enterprise of my predecessor, the late Bishop of St. Louis, we have also, the church of St. Francis Xavier, attended by the Jesuit Fathers of the St. Louis University, as well as the church of Our Lady of Victories, which was opened quite recently, and is devoted to the exclusive use of the Germans. In addition to this, we may mention two other congregations; one of Germans who now assemble for divine worship in the chapel of St. Aloysius near the University of the Jesuit Fathers, and the other, half German and

---

4 “*Berichte der Leopoldinen Stiftung*,” Heft XVIII, pp. 4-6. The original was in Latin.

half English, in the southern part of the city, entrusted to the Lazarist Fathers of my diocesan seminary.

The Jesuits are busy at present with the erection of the church of St. Joseph, in the northern part of the city, among an almost exclusively German population. In order to aid them in this undertaking I have given them \$300 out of the allotment made to me by the Association of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyons. Half of the amount allotted to me by the Society of which Your Grace is President, was used for the completion of the German church of Our Lady of Victories.

The priests of the Congregation of the Mission have built a very large church in the southern part of the city, which, when completed will be a very beautiful house of God. This church although not exclusively devoted to the Germans, still accommodates every Sunday and Holyday, a large number of the Germans living in the vicinity, for mass and christian instructions, at an hour that does not interfere with the services for the English-speaking Catholics. In order to aid the zealous priests in their efforts, I have made a contribution of \$1000. But with this I have exhausted the means that were placed at my disposal by the generosity of the faithful of Europe. The church to be dedicated to St. Vincent de Paul, is already covered, and will be completed next year.

Accordingly the German population of St. Louis possesses three commodious churches; St. Joseph's on the north side, Our Lady of Victories in the center, and St. Vincent de Paul in the southern part. As I recur in memory to the condition of his part of my flock two years since, and compare its former sad state of penury and want, occasioned by the rapid increase in numbers and absolute lack of means, with their present state, I am forced to recognize the finger of God in the present favorable prospects for the future of the foster children committed to my episcopal care, and to raise my hands to Heaven in thanksgiving for the help and encouragement extended to me amid so many distresses and afflictions. Should the Leopoldine Society be disposed to make an allotment from their funds to me for the next year, I will devote the entire amount to the payment of the debt, incurred in building the church of Our Lady of Victories, an amount of \$5000 at 8% interest. I shall, of course, be always prepared to the full extent of the means with which the generosity of the charitable societies of Europe may favor me, to succor all in their needs, without any regard to person or nationality, but only as duty and conscience demand.

"Besides the churches just mentioned, a new church intended principally for the English-speaking Catholics under the title of St. Patrick, is in process of erection. The building will be completed within a few

months, at least in so far that divine service can be held within its bare walls.

“Your Grace will see from this statement that we have even now six churches for the Catholic people of this city; a goodly number, but one that is most necessary, and at the same time, exerts a happy influence upon the religious and moral character of our population.

“Besides the churches, we have in our city four chapels, one in the convent of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, the second in the Hospital of the Sisters of Charity, the third and fourth in the convents of the Sisters of the Visitation.

“These three communities of Sisters also conduct educational establishments for girls, so that Catholics need not send their daughters to schools conducted by Protestants.

“The University of St. Louis, which belongs to the Jesuits and the College of St. Vincent de Paul at Cape Girardeau devote their attention to the education of young men and boys. Besides the institutions of higher learning, we have three or four of a lower rank in St. Louis. . . Four Free schools, two for boys and two for girls, offer Catholic education to 800 or 900 children, who would otherwise be induced to attend the schools, from which all instruction in Catholic doctrine is positively excluded.

“We have two or rather three orphan asylums in St. Louis, one for girls in the Convent of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, founded by the munificence of an honorable Catholic (Mr. Mullanphy) who died some years since. Two other orphanages, one for boys, and one for girls founded and conducted by the Sisters of Charity.

“During this year I have built a new Home for Orphan-girls, which cost me \$8000. In connection with which fact, I must remark, that the ground upon which the building stands was given me by a charitable woman, who, in addition to this gift, generously contributed \$3000 to the building fund. In order to supply the need of missionaries, I have formed two Seminaries, exclusively devoted to the training of young men for the ecclesiastical state. The so-called Little Seminary is in Perryville, in the southern part of the state, and is attended by nineteen young levites; the Grand Seminary is in St. Louis, near the episcopal residence, where there are now ten students. Both institutions are entrusted to the care of the priests of the Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul.

“The entire number of church-buildings in the diocese does not exceed fifty, and in regard to construction, they are, with the exception of the Cathedral, the church at Perryville, and a few others, unpretentious and for the most part of wood.

“Along the borders of the Missouri River there are a few parishes in which the Germans form the majority, and which are subject to the Jesuits; There are also many Germans in St. Charles, Washington, Jefferson City, Westport, etc. But this part of the diocese should have twice as many priests as it now has. . .

“In addition to the care of the Seminaries and the College at Cape Girardeau, The Lazarist Fathers attend various missionary stations throughout the diocese, and always show a readiness to assist the Bishop in urgent cases.

“The Ladies of the Sacred Heart have, besides their Convent in St. Louis, two other houses: one at St. Charles, and the other at Florissant. The St. Louis convent also conducts a boarding school for young ladies, and a free school for girls.

“The Sisters of St. Joseph have two establishments in the diocese, one at Carondelet conducted as a boarding school for young ladies, and the other in St. Louis, with an educational institution and also day-school for negro girls. We also have three houses of the Sisters of Loretto, the foundation of the Rev. Charles Nerinckx, a Belgian priest of great zeal and holy life. These houses are at Bethlehem near Perryville, at Cape Girardeau and at Ste. Genevieve. All these communities conduct schools. The Jesuit Fathers preside over a very interesting mission among the Potawatomi Indians in the western part of the state, and that, with such splendid success, that there is every reason to hope that through their exertions, the influence of our holy religion will soon extend itself to many if not all the larger tribes in the vicinity.

“Thus, I have tried, according to Your Grace’s wish, to give some details concerning the religious condition of my diocese: they may not appear very noteworthy; yet they certainly will show how wisely my Venerable Predecessor, Bishop Rosati, provided for the progress of this diocese through the introduction of so many religious and charitable institutions and the helpful solicitude he always extended to them.”<sup>5</sup>

Bishop Kenrick’s argument in proof of the fact that the German Catholics of his diocese were treated as well as any other nationality, was, indeed, convincing and bound to bring the happiest results.

---

5 “*Berichte der Leopoldinen Stiftung*,” Heft XVIII, pp. 6-14, original in English. Re-translated from the German.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE FIRST FRUITS OF BISHOP KENRICK'S SOLICITUDE

It is a memorable fact that in the three years of Bishop Kenrick's coadjutorship, the City of St. Louis was enriched with five splendid churches, *St. Francis Xavier*, near the University on Washington Avenue and Green Street, *Our Lady of the Victories* on Third and Gratiot, *St. Joseph's* on Ninth and Biddle, *St. Vincent's* on Ninth and Decatur, and *St. Patrick's* on Sixth and Biddle. These structures were so well planned and built that, with one exception, they remain to this day, not only as venerable monuments of the olden days, but as ornaments of the living present. The letters of Bishop Kenrick revealed to us the strategy employed by the head and leader of the movement: this chapter is intended to explain, in some detail, the various phases of its development and surprising success.

The Jesuit Fathers of the College were destined to lead the way in the erection of new parish churches in St. Louis. The University chapel of St. Aloysius had become too small for the large congregation of Irish and German Catholics that assembled there on Sundays and Holy-days of obligation. Accordingly the erection of two large churches was determined on by the Fathers, *St. Francis Xavier* for the Irish and *St. Joseph's* for the Germans. On March 13th, 1840, a meeting of the Catholics of the neighborhood was held in St. Aloysius Chapel to deliberate on ways and means towards the erection of the new church. The great majority of subscribers were Irish immigrants. Of the Irish names may be noted those of the two St. Louis pioneers, Edward Walsh and Hugh O'Neil.

Among the subscribers from the French and native American elements were Emilie Chouteau, M. P. LeDuc, Julius DeMun, L. A. Benoist, James H. Lucas, William P. Clark, George Rogers Clark, Lewis M. Clark and Dr. Farrar. The subscription list also contains a large number of German names, about ninety, though its printed caption declares that in the new church "the Sermons, Instructions and Lectures will be exclusively in the English language." Apparently there was an understanding by which the German Catholics of the district were to use the church, pending the erection of a church of their own.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Garraghan, "Early Chapters in the History of St. Louis University" in "St. Louis Catholic Historical Review," vol. V, pp. 119-121 passim.

On March 23rd, ground was broken for the new church and on Sunday, April 12th, the corner stone was laid by Bishop Rosati, Father Elet, Rector of the University, addressing the assembled people from the east balcony of the main University building.

On Easter Sunday, 1843, the church, under the name of St. Francis Xavier, was opened for divine services. It was an imposing edifice in the classic style and from its first days down to its dismantling in 1888, after the University had been moved to another site, remained a favorite shrine of devotion for the Catholic residents of St. Louis, to whom it was familiarly known as the College Church. The interior finishing of the church was in keeping with its fine architectural design. Paintings and statues of great merit adorned the walls, some of them gifts from Father Roothaan, others brought by Father De Smet from Belgium. Great throngs gathered to view these works of Catholic art, when they were first put in place. The five altars were the work of Paschal Lincetti, a lay-brother attached to the University. Under one of the altars rested the body of St. Florentin which Father Van de Velde brought from Rome in 1842.<sup>2</sup>

The Female Free School, attached to the Church of St. Francis Xavier, was opened on the 4th of September, in the new and convenient school house, corner of St. Charles Street and Tenth Street. One hundred and seventy-five were admitted by the Sisters of Charity, who take charge of this institution. On the 24th instance the Male Free School was reopened in the basement of the church. It was under the charge of four scholastics of the Society of Jesus; three hundred and fifty were admitted at the opening."<sup>3</sup>

"On the 10th of October, 1844, a new Catholic Free School was opened in St. Louis on the corner of Ninth and Green Streets. It was destined exclusively for the German male children, and superintended by the members of the Society of Jesus."<sup>4</sup>

The number of German Catholics in St. Louis had during the thirties grew to such immense proportions, relatively speaking, that Bishop Rosati felt it his duty to provide for them a church of their own. The location chosen was in the southern part of the city, where the larger part of them had their homes: but the place he bought for this purpose was not well chosen, as Chouteau's Pond shut off direct access. Bishop Rosati paid \$3,000. for the plot of ground and, on starting for Europe in 1840, ordered Father J. Fischer and Mr. Weitzeneker to take up subscriptions among the Germans for the proposed

<sup>2</sup> Garraghan, 1. c., pp. 120 and 121.

<sup>3</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," vol. I, October, 1843.

<sup>4</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," vol. I, May, 1843.

church. Nothing, however, was accomplished in the matter. Bishop Kenrick sent Father Fischer to Meramec (now Maxville, Jefferson Co.) and confided the care of the Germans to Father Lutz. Services were continued for them at St. Mary's Chapel, near the Cathedral. As the distance to the Cathedral was too great for many of the German Catholics of the south side, Bishop Rosati, ordered that Father Dahmen, C. M. should hold special services for them in the Chapel of the Blessed Trinity near the Seminary of the Lazarists.<sup>5</sup> The Germans of the north side found a ready welcome in the Chapel of St. Aloysius. Gratifying as these various provisions were, they could not satisfy the needs of the German immigrants. Bishop Kenrick saw this at once and determined to set matters aright. A pious French lady, Mrs. Hunt, donated her half of plot of ground on Third and Gratiot Sts., to the Bishop for the use of the German Congregation, the Bishop then bought the other half from her brother, J. H. Lucas, and building operations were begun at once.

On Sunday the 25th of June, 1843, the Bishop of New Orleans, Anthony Blanc, officiated at High Mass in the Cathedral. At five o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, the same prelate solemnly blessed the corner stone of the proposed German Church of Our Lady of Victory, at the corner of Third and Mulberry Streets. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Odin, Vicar-Apostolic of Texas, and the Coadjutor Bishop of this diocese, assisting at the ceremony. A large number of people assembled to view the interesting ceremony; the Hibernian Benevolent Society was also on the spot. Previous to the ceremony, the Coadjutor Bishop addressed the assembly on the nature of the rite at which they were about to assist. Father Cotting, S. J., preached in the German language after the conclusion of the ceremony. The collection taken up in aid of the new church was \$149.00.<sup>6</sup>

"On the 15th of September, 1844, the new German Church, on the corner of Third and Mulberry Street, was solemnly blessed by the Very Rev. John Timon, C. M., with the permission of the Bishop. High Mass was celebrated at ten o'clock by the Rev. F. X. Dahmen, C. M., assisted by deacon and subdeacon; and the Rev. J. Cotting, S. J., delivered an eloquent discourse in the German language to a vast concourse of people, on the text: 'This day is salvation come to this house' (Luke xix, 9). This church is dedicated to the Almighty under the invocation of 'Our Lady of Victory'.<sup>7</sup>

It was a great day of joy and jubilation for the German Catholics of St. Louis: Father John Fischer was recalled from Meramec and put

5 Rosati's Diary.

6 "Catholic Cabinet," June, 1843.

7 "Catholic Cabinet," vol. II, 4, October, 1844.

in charge of the new church. Father Lutz, as we shall see, was employed at the time in building a church for the Irish Catholics. From Bishop Kenrick's letters we learn what large sums were contributed to the erection of St. Mary's Church by the Leopoldine Society of the Austrian Empire. For three years Father Fischer was pastor of this, the first German Church in the city, to be succeeded in 1847 by Father Joseph Melcher, to whom Father Fisher was assigned as assistant.

In regard to the Church of St. Patrick the following quotation from the *Catholic Cabinet* will give the necessary data:

"The erection of St. Patrick's church, in the northern part of this city, was commenced after Easter, and there is every possibility that the work will be carried on with energy. The first stone of this church was solemnly blessed by the Coadjutor Bishop on Sunday, the 17th of October, 1843; it was then hoped that the foundations of the building would be laid before the setting in of winter; but, this having been found impracticable, the work was necessarily deferred until the present season. St. Patrick's will be a free church. Contributions toward this truly Catholic undertaking will be thankfully received by Rev. Geo. A. Hamilton, at present assistant at the Cathedral, who is to be the pastor of the congregation; as also by any of the Catholic clergymen of the city. The lot on which this church is being built is the gift of Mrs. Anne Biddle, and the sum of one thousand dollars was generously contributed towards the new church by her excellent mother, the late Mrs. Mullanphy.<sup>8</sup>

"Mr. James Lucas, brother of Mrs. Hunt, has given a large lot, in the northwestern part of the city, for the purpose of a Catholic Church, in which, we have been informed, the German congregation that at present assembles in the Chapel of St. Aloysius, attached to the University, will commence the erection of a church in the course of next year under the direction of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus."

The building operations at St. Patrick's made but slow progress, owing to lack of means, and the rapid changes in leadership from Father Hamilton to Father Lutz and from the latter to Father Wheeler.

At last the work was completed after a struggle of three years in which the Bishop himself was forced to take the lead.

"On the 4th of May, 1845, the new church of St. Patrick, situated on the corner of 6th and Biddle Streets, in this city was solemnly dedicated to divine service. The ceremony was performed by Very Rev. J. Timon, Superior of the Lazarists in the United States, who also delivered an able discourse appropriate to the occasion.

<sup>8</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," May, 1843.

The church measures 120 by 60 feet.

Besides Mrs. Biddle and her mother, other citizens, too, have contributed towards this meritorious object; although, we regret to state, a very considerable debt has been incurred by the Bishop in its erection."<sup>9</sup>

The contractor and builder of the church as well as of St. Vincent's, was Francis Saler, the well known Catholic publisher, and general benefactor of the Church in St. Louis.

Canon O'Hanlon relates in his pleasant sprightly way how the foundations of the Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Soulard's Addition laid in 1839 were, at the invitation of Fathers Timon and Paquin, rooted up by the students of the Seminary, with borrowed picks and shovels and crowbars and the stones carted away to the new location on which St. Vincent's Church was soon to arise.

"On the 17th of March, 1844, the Rt. Rev. Bishop Kenrick laid the cornerstone of a church in Soulard's addition of St. Louis. The edifice will be cruciform; in length including the portico, 150 feet; breadth in the nave 60 feet, in the transepts 80. The well-selected location and the truly classic proportions of the plan, drawn by Barnet & Co., will make this building an ornament to the city, whilst affording the consolations of religion to a numerous population, who are now almost suffocated in the crowded temporary chapel in which they worship. The vast concourse of our fellow citizens, the Hibernian Society, the Catholic Temperance Society, the Young Catholic's Friend Society, with their appropriate flags and badges; the clergy in their robes, singing, during the imposing ceremonial of the Church, appropriate hymns in the solemn Gregorian chant, brought powerfully to memory, but under happy auspices, the Scripture text: "And when the masons laid the foundation of the Temple of the Lord, the priests stood in their ornaments with trumpets and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise God by the hand of David, king of Israel. And they sung together hymns and praise to the Lord, because He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. And all the people shouted with a great shout, praising the Lord, because the foundations of the temple of the Lord were laid." (Edras, Chap., iii.)

In the cornerstone was placed a glass jar hermetically sealed, containing some American coins, some public documents regarding the events that have occurred since the foundation of this Republic, and a Latin inscription on parchment, in words of which the following is a translation:

---

<sup>9</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," vol. II, 9.

In the Year of the Redemption MDCCCXLIV, whilst the Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory XVI, ruled the universal Church of Christ in the XIV year of his Pontificate, John Tyler, Chief Magistrate, presiding over the United States of America the LXVII year of American liberty happily established, the State of Missouri having the Hon. M. M. Marmaduke, acting Governor, the XVII of March being the IV Sunday of Lent, in the evening, this first Stone- of the Temple about to be erected-to the Lord Thrice Holy and Mighty-the Eternal Living God, under the invocation-of St. Vincent of Paul, Confessor, was duly and canonically laid, by the Right Rev. Peter Richard Kenrick, Bishop of St. Louis, the very Rev. John Timon being Assistant Priest-Rev. Benedict Roux and Joseph A. Lutz, being Assistant Priests—Rev. Benedict Roux and Joseph A. Lutz, assistant Deacons, a numerous clergy—and the students of the Seminary—were present; also, the Hibernian Benevolent Society, the Catholic Temperance and Young Catholic's Friend Societies—had places assigned, whilst—a vast concourse of people surrounded the spot.”<sup>10</sup>

St. Vincent's church was intended to serve both the English speaking as well as the German Catholics of the South Side. St. Joseph's church was destined for the use of the German Catholics of the North Side. The Leopoldine Society took deep interest in these undertakings.<sup>11</sup>

The building was consecrated by Bishop Kenrick on November 16th, 1845, assisted by the Jesuit Provincial Van de Velde and the pastor of St. Vincent's the Rev. Thaddaeus Amat, C. M. and F. Seretta. The solemn High-Mass coram episcopo was celebrated by Father Francis Cellini. This year also marks the opening of the parish school, under the direction of the Sisters of St. Joseph; Mother Delphine Fontbonne was the first Superior, Father Francis X. Dahmen the first Director of the School. Among the early priests attending St. Vincent's Church, the one that endeared himself most to all classes of people was the saintly John Gerard Uhland.

The property on Marion Street, on which Bishop Rosati had intended to build the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, was assigned by Bishop Kenrick as a temporary home for the Sisters of the Visitation, whom the great flood of 1844 had driven away from their convent at Kaskaskia.

The beginnings of St. Joseph's Church coincide with the large German immigration of 1835-1850. In order to meet the spiritual wants of these sturdy but poor Catholics who had their homes in the north-western portion of the city, the Fathers of St. Louis University opened for their use the Chapel of St. Aloysius, where the Fathers Helias, Bussechotts, Eysvogels and Emig labored faithfully among them, until

<sup>10</sup> "Missouri Republican," March, 18, 1844.

<sup>11</sup> Father James Duggan preached the sermon.

in 1844 Father James Cotting, a native of Switzerland, was appointed pastor of the proposed new church to be erected under the invocation of St. Joseph.

The first mention of St. Joseph's Church is taken from the *Catholic Cabinet*, April 1844:

"On the first of March a new Catholic church was commenced by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, on the corner of 11th and Biddle Streets, destined for the German Catholics in the western part of the city. The church's dimensions are 100 feet long by 60 feet wide. It is on a beautiful and elevated spot, measuring 150 feet by 100, being a donation of Mrs. Anne Biddle of this city for that purpose. The ceremony of blessing the cornerstone will take place this month."<sup>12</sup>

The Provincial of the Western Province of the Society of Jesus in America, Father James Van de Velde, on the 20th of March 1844 acknowledged the receipt of 10,000 florins from the Leopoldine Society of Austria, and explains the various uses to which he had devoted this generous gift:

"Father Helias received 2000 frs. for the benefit of his church at Harrville (now Taos) . . . This church is to be the central point from which he will visit the various other missions under his jurisdiction.

"Father Busshotts also received 2000 frs. He intends to build next Spring a church of brick in the little town of Washington, the main place of his missions, as the old wooden chapel, situated two miles from the town, is falling to pieces.

"Father Walters will use a part of 1,000 fr. that fell to his share, for the purchase of a plat of ground for a church and divide the balance among the missions dependent on Dardenne.

The remaining 5,000 frs. were intended to buy a suitable lot and to erect upon it a church of brick for the use of the numerous German Catholics, that heretofore worshiped in the little chapel of our University. A favorable stroke of fortune helped greatly to advance our purpose. A wealthy and charitable lady of the city, whom I visited, offered me as a gift a fine parcel of land for the good work and I am now determined to make an immediate beginning with the 5,000 frs., of building the church so very necessary for the Germans. We also asked for subscriptions, but as the people are mostly of the poorer class, subscriptions were not forthcoming in larger amounts: but many of the people offered their labor in the work of excavating and raising the foundation. Since March 4th, when we started the work, they have been faithful in the performance of what they promised."<sup>13</sup> The Father Provincial

<sup>12</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," April, 1844.

<sup>13</sup> "Berichte der Leopoldinen Stiftung," Heft XVII, p. 38.

was not disappointed in his expectations. As the *Catholic Cabinet* of May 1844 informs us:

"On the 14th of April 1844 took place the ceremony of laying the cornerstone of the new Catholic church, St. Joseph's in the northwestern part of this city, destined for the use of the German Catholics. The imposing rites of the occasion were witnessed by a great concourse of people, who had assembled on the ground or accompanied the solemn procession of the ecclesiastics from the Church of St. Francis Xavier. The Hibernian Society attended with their banners, badges and music, and also the children of the various Catholic Free Schools. The following is the inscription on the parchment deposited in the corner stone. It was in the Latin language, a translation of which into English we subjoin:

"For the greater glory of God, the honor of the Catholic religion, and the benefit of the faithful of this diocese, Gregory the XVI, being Sovereign Pontiff; John Tyler, President of the United States; M. M. Marmaduke, acting Governor of the State of Missouri; in the MDCCCXLIV year of our Redemption, the LXVII of our Independence; on the first Sunday after Easter; the day after the Ides of April, at the request of the Very Rev. James Van de Velde, Provincial of the Society of Jesus; the Rt. Rev. Peter Richard Kenrick, Bishop of St. Louis, solemnly and canonically, laid and blessed the corner stone of this Temple to be dedicated to the Triune God, under the invocation of St. Joseph. The Very Rev. John Timon, Visitor Cong, of the Mission, being assistant priest, and the Revs. Joseph Irissarri and John B. Druits, Soc. Jesus, assistant deacons. The clergy of the city, the Catholic societies, and a vast concourse of people assisting at the celebration." <sup>14</sup>

"The plan of the edifice was furnished by Mr. Geo. Purvis, architect. It is to be of the Ionic order, with a portico supported by four fluted columns, and with an octagonal turret and spire of beautiful design and correct proportions. The foundations are already laid. The size of the building will be 107 by 60 feet, and when completed, will furnish accommodations for a large congregation and be an ornament to the city. The Rev. Father Cotting, S. J. delivered the sermon on the occasion in German, and paid an eloquent tribute to the generosity of Mrs. Anne Biddle, who presented to the Society, the valuable lot on which the church is to be erected." <sup>15</sup>

A school for girls taught by the Sisters of Charity was opened August 17, 1846, and for boys in 1848. The succession of pastors was:

<sup>14</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," January, 1844. The actual cost of St. Francis Xavier Church was \$40,000; that of St. Mary's \$12,000 and that of the Cathedral \$85,000, as Canon Salzbacher states in 1845.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem.

James Cotting 1844-1846; John N. Hofbauer, 1846-1852; Joseph Pat-schowski, 1854-1859; Joseph Weber, 1859-1869, Peter Tschieder, 1869-1875; Frederic Hagemann, 1875-1881, a name that brings us down to quite modern times. Besides the actual pastors, a goodly number of other Priests of the Society of Jesus have labored at St. Joseph's. So Father Martin Seisl, who founded the first German Catholic Paper in St. Louis (1848) and greatly helped to build up the St. Vincent Orphan-age. The famous Missionary Father F. N. Weninger, the two Fathers Niederkorn, Francis Braun and Nicholas L. Schlechter, all men of distinction were among the number.<sup>16</sup>

During the cholera epidemic of 1849 St. Joseph's Parish lost many faithful members, at times, to the extent of ten to fifteen a day. To provide for the many orphans of the German parishes St. Vincent's Orphanage was founded, and the spiritual care of the bereaved ones placed in the hands of the priests of St. Joseph's.

Another memorable activity of the Fathers of St. Joseph's was their colonization work performed during the first twenty years of the parish.

Many German immigrants landing in St. Louis wished to settle on farms. The Fathers of St. Joseph's who were in constant communication with their Jesuit brethren in the interior of the state, directed the newcomers to Osage, Franklin, St. Charles, and adjoining Counties,<sup>17</sup> where they would find priests, churches and schools. Thus the numerous flourishing parishes west and north of St. Louis sprang up, increased and multiplied under the blessing of God.

Up to Sunday, the 25th of May 1845, the Cathedral had been the Parish-Church for the entire City of St. Louis. On that day a pastoral letter of the Bishop, addressed to the Catholics of St. Louis was read in all the churches of this city, announcing the division of this portion of the Diocese into four ecclesiastical districts or parishes, to be called the parish of St. Louis, of St. Francis Xavier, of St. Patrick, and St. Vincent de Paul, to which the limits designated in the following extract from the pastoral, have been assigned. This arrangement is to come into effect on the 1st of July, 1845. "The parish of St. Louis is bounded by a line commencing at the western extremity of Chouteau Avenue, and running in an eastward direction to its intersection with Fifth Street; thence in a southward direction through the middle of Fifth Street to its termination on Carondelet Avenue, hence in a north-easterly direction to the top of Wood Street, and thence through the middle of Wood Street to the river; thence in a northerly direction, coinci-

---

<sup>16</sup> Chancery Records.

<sup>17</sup> Report of St. Joseph's Church, St. Louis M. S.

dent with the city's eastern limit, to the foot of Laurel Street and Washington Avenue, to the latter's intersection with Fifth Street, thence through the middle of Fifth Street to the intersection of this latter with Olive Street, thence through the middle of Olive Street to its western extremity, i. e., 18th Street, and from this point, coincident with the western limit of the city, to the extremity of Chouteau Avenue.

"The parish of St. Francis Xavier will be bounded by a line commencing from the middle point of Olive Street running eastwardly to its intersection with Fifth Street; thence through the middle of Fifth Street to its intersection with Franklin Avenue, from which point it will run in a westernly direction through the middle of Franklin Avenue to its Western extremity, Eighteenth Street, and from this to the western extremity of Olive Street.

"The Parish of St. Patrick will be bounded by a line drawn from the western extremity of Franklin Avenue running eastwardly through the middle of Franklin Avenue to its intersection with Fifth Street, thence southwardly through the middle of Fifth Street to its intersection with Washington Avenue; thence in an eastward direction through the middle of Washington Avenue and Laurel Street to the river, and thence proceeding northwardly, and coincident with the line bounding the limits of the city, north of the one so drawn through Franklin and Laurel Street.

"The Parish of St. Vincent de Paul will include all that part of the city south of the Southern limit of the Parish of St. Louis.

"To meet the wants of the German portion of the Catholic population included within the parish of St. Louis, we hereby declare the Church of Our Lady of Victory, in said parish a succursal church, or chapel of ease to the above parish, for this portion of its Catholic inhabitants and for these alone. We likewise declare the present chapel of St. Aloysius, a chapel of ease for the German Catholic population of the parishes of St. Francis Xavier and St. Patrick, until St. Joseph's new church, now in the course of erection in this latter parish, be completed and no longer. When the church of St. Joseph shall be dedicated to public worship, we hereby declare that it will be a chapel of ease to the aforesaid parishes of St. Patrick and St. Francis Xavier, but only the German Catholic population residing within said parishes. In these succursal churches or chapels of ease, the reception of the Sacraments and other religious duties can be complied with by those for whose exclusive use we have assigned them, as validly and lawfully as in their parish church."<sup>18</sup> This system of succursal churches or chapels of ease

---

<sup>18</sup> "Catholic Cabinet, vol. III, I. Pastoral Letter May 1845.

introduced by Bishop Kenrick in 1845, was a cause of friction between the various congregations of the city, and after a decree from Rome in the matter, June 8th, 1887, was finally abrogated by Archbishop Kain, in the Third Synod of St. Louis, 1896:

“We declare that the parishes of other than the English languages, German, Bohemian, Polish, shall be held as altogether equal to those of the English language, and entirely independent of them, and that there shall be no distinction between them in as far as parochial rights and privileges are concerned.”<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Diocesan Synod of St. Louis III, p. 60.

## THE DIOCESAN SEMINARY

On his arrival in Paris in April 1842 Bishop Rosati wrote among a number of other important things a memorable sentence in regard to the Seminary, over which he had presided so long, and which was still his dearest place on earth: "We must transfer the Seminary to St. Louis and separate the diocesan Seminarians from those of the Congregation of the Missions. A lady has given me land in one of the suburbs, valued at 20,000 francs. I bought the tract next to it for the same amount. There we shall build a church and a Seminary near the church, both buildings are now fifteen feet high."<sup>1</sup>

The place was called Soulard's Addition. Bishop Rosati had built a row of small houses, on the tract, but some of them had been consumed by flames, and building operations on the Church of the Holy Trinity, which was to be the Seminary Church, had been suspended for lack of means.

The transfer of professors and students was, however, effected in 1842, the Coadjutor Bishop and the Lazarist Visitor co-operating in the most friendly spirit. The Catholic Almanac of 1843 reports: "The Seminary heretofore connected with St. Mary's College, Perry County, is now placed at St. Louis."

The Very Rev. John Timon, Visitor of the Congregation of the Mission and Vicar General of St. Louis, Superior; Rev. Thaddaeus Amat, C. M., and James Tiernan, C. M., Professors. The number of theological students was six. None were admitted into the Seminary but those capable of commencing the study of philosophy.

The Preparatory Seminary of St. Louis was conducted by the Clerks du Saint Viateur, whom Bishop Rosati had lately sent to St. Louis from their Motherhouse in France, and of whom Bishop Kenrick wrote: "The Freres du St. Viateur have arrived. Three of them are with Rev. Mr. Fontbonne at Carondelet, two are about to occupy a house which Mrs. Biddle has placed at their disposition for two years."<sup>2</sup>

The College of St. Mary's at the Barrens continued its educational work under Father Hector Figari C. M. as President and the Vincentian Fathers Joseph Paquin, John Larkins, J. B. Robert and J. B. Escoffier, as professors.

---

<sup>1</sup> Rosati to the Propagation of the Faith, Paris, April 14, 1842.

<sup>2</sup> Kenrick to Rosati, February 20, 1842, Archives of St. Louis Archdiocese.

The Preparatory Seminary of the Clerks du Viateur, at Carondelet, however, proving a sad failure, another great change was made at the Barrens, which the following announcement, will explain:

“On the 1st of May, 1843, under the patronage of Bishop Kenrick, Coadjutor Bishop of St. Louis, St. Mary’s Seminary, Perry County, Missouri, was appropriated solely to the reception and instruction of youth, who feel a desire to prepare themselves for the Sacred ministry and who give some indications that God has called them to so holy a state.”<sup>3</sup>

“The department of collegiate studies for secular pursuits will be removed to Cape Girardeau, so that the clerical students alone will remain at St. Mary’s of the Barrens,” was the announcement made by Father Hector Figari, C. M., the President of the College, about to be transported to Cape Girardeau.

During the first two years Fathers Amat, Paquin and Dahmen conducted the Seminary at St. Louis, with eight and then sixteen students in attendance, whilst the Visitor resided at the Barrens. Father Thaddeus Amat was a Spaniard of very dark complexion and medium sized figure. He was a rather rigid disciplinarian and consequently not very popular with the students. But he was a just man, a sound scholar and an excellent professor. In 1854 Father Amat was made Bishop of Monterey and Los Angeles.

A short time after, John O’Hanlon, the future Canon of Dublin, entered the Theological Seminary of St. Louis, and 1843, the Very Reverend Joseph Paquin, a native of Florissant, became Superior at St. Louis, Father Amat having been transferred to the Barrens. The students were fifteen in number, and all, with the exception of one Italian, two Frenchmen and one native Kentuckian, had made their preparatory course in some Irish College. Archbishop Kenrick, in accordance with his earlier sentiment addressed to Bishop Rosati: “We need German and English-speaking priests,” obtained three separate contingents from Germany through the persuasiveness of his Vicar-General Joseph Melcher, and a steady stream of English-speaking helpers through his own personal efforts at Maynooth and Carlow, in Ireland. Both were very successful, not only in regard to numbers, but also as to the quality of these acquisitions. “There is,” as Bishop England informed Bishop Rosati in 1832, “a greater number of candidates for orders than the Irish Church requires and each Bishop selects at examinations those whom he thinks most useful for his diocese. Amongst the remainder are several excellent subjects, the better amongst them are in the habit of then offering for the English Missions; and a few have gone across

---

<sup>3</sup> Church Directory for 1843.

the Atlantic, but generally these last were those who had least hopes in Europe. The Irish Prelates are now disposed to give a preference to the church of the province and to afford us every aid to secure good priests.”<sup>4</sup> Archbishop Kenrick, no doubt, enjoyed this preference in an eminent degree, as the many “excellent subjects” he obtained from Ireland for his Seminary would prove.

Father Melcher’s first band of young levites had not as yet arrived at the time of which John O’Hanlon wrote, giving us the following pleasant glimpses of student life at the St. Louis Seminary, in those far off days:

“Our Seminary had been located within the Soulard Addition, in St. Louis—the estate of a Creole Catholic gentleman, whose fine brick mansion was near us—At one of the evening recreations, Father Timon came in to meet the assembled students, and he informed us, that soon we might be in preparation for flitting to Monsieur Soulard’s fine house; that a large plot had been secured on which foundations and walls had been already placed, that these should be torn down and transferred to another site, where the present church of St. Vincent de Paul stands. About this time, also, the slight rafters supporting the plank flooring of our temporary church had given way on Sunday, while a numerous congregation was present. A panic ensued. Several persons having been seriously injured in their eagerness to escape through the doors and windows. High Mass had been interrupted until something like order was effected; and it was found that only in one particular section the floor had sunk down for a few feet. To save expense the Seminarians unaminously proposed to Fathers Timon and Paquin, that they should have a holiday, that picks, crowbars and shovels might be borrowed, while they engaged to level the walls, and to root up the foundation stones, so that they could be carried away to the new site. Permission was obtained, and the very next day all went cheerfully to work. A perfect demolition was effected before the day was far advanced, and not one stone was left upon another, except in a loose state, and separated from mortar or cement.

“The new house and its garden were soon ready for our reception, and with all expedition we removed our furniture and effects to a much better site. . .

“In the year 1839, the foundation for a new and large church had been laid beside our former seminary; and in the humble chapel of the Holy Trinity<sup>5</sup> attached, English speaking and German congregations

---

<sup>4</sup> Bishop England’s correspondence with Bishop Rosati, “*Illinois Catholic Historical Review*,” vol. IX, p. 268.

<sup>5</sup> O’Hanlon wrote “St. Mary’s Chapel,” but that it a palpable mistake as St. Mary’s Chapel was near the Cathedral.

met at stated hours. Now we had uprooted all those foundations, and the stones had been carted away to the better site selected. A new design was formed, and an edifice cruciform in shape was planned. Great preparations were made to have all things in readiness to lay the foundation stone on the 17th of March 1844—under the invocation and title of St. Vincent de Paul....

“Meanwhile our new church was progressing, while our Sundays and Holydays were still spent in the old chapel, during the hours of High Mass and Vespers.

“In the summer of 1845, the latter was abandoned and the former was opened for Divine Service.”<sup>6</sup>

The Seminary of St. Louis, now established in the fine old Mansion of the Soulards, continued under the rectorship of Father Paquin, whom Canon O’Hanlon describes as “a most amiable man who, whilst training the students in piety, delighted in promoting cheerfulness and hilarity.” In the Spring of 1844, his Superior, Father Timon spoke in his presence about the arduous and painful mission of Texas, and the difficulty of providing for the needs of the people there, when Father Paquin exclaimed: “Lo, here I am send me.” His generous offer was accepted and in a short while Father Paquin was on his way to Galveston. The yellow fever was raging in the towns of southern Texas. Houston called for his ministrations, but ere he could answer the call, he himself was stricken and died of the dread disease, August 13th, 1844.

The two Spanish Vincentians, Jerome Cercos and Joseph J. Saretta, who served as professors under the Rector Joseph Paquin, “were able to tell many interesting stories respecting the war in Spain.” Both were forced by the revolutionists to fly from their native land, and to seek refuge in the motherhouse of their Congregation in Paris, from where they were sent to the mission in St. Louis. Father Cercos died at Cape Girardeau, on March 28th, 1845. Shortly before that date (February 4th) the Congregation of the Mission suffered another loss in the death of Father John B. Robert, one of the French clergymen that had accompanied Father Odin to America in 1835, and had served as professor on the staff of St. Mary’s Seminary.

But of all the professors of that time at the St. Louis Diocesan Seminary, it was Francis X. Dahmen, the German cavalry soldier of Napoleon’s great campaigns, that won the highest degree of love and admiration from his youthful friends, not only by the glamour of his early military career, but even more so, by his undoubted courage, his

---

<sup>6</sup> “Life and Scenery in Missouri, Reminiscences of a Missionary Priest,” Dublin, 1890, p. 88.

strict sense of honor and his integrity of character. His roughness never trenched on rudeness, his courtesy was no mere form, but the unstudied product of a natural kindness of heart. It is to Father Dahmen's great credit that he used his fluency in German speech for the benefit of the German immigrants of Ste. Genevieve and St. Louis.

Before the completion of St. Vincent's College at Cape Girardeau the Preparatory Seminary for the education of youthful aspirants to the priesthood, as well as a novitiate of the Vincentians, was established in the former mansion of the Spanish Governor on the bank of the Mississippi . . . Rev. Michael Domenec, C.M., afterwards Bishop of Pittsburgh, was Superior of the Seminary, and Rev. James Rollando, C. M., was Master of Novices. In 1843 the College of St. Vincent was occupied by the students from the Barrens, whilst the "Little Seminary" and the Novitiate were transferred to the Barrens. Of Joseph Rosati's three foundations in the Barrens, the Diocesan Seminary was now in St. Louis, the College was at Cape Girardeau, and only the Novitiate of the Order remained in the old place.

In 1848, the Diocesan Seminary of St. Louis was established by Archbishop Kenrick at a new place and under a new management. The new place was the ancient village of Carondelet which had grown up on the very site of the first settlement of Europeans in Missouri, and the new management was composed of secular priests.

"The start was made with twelve students. But there were thirty-two others in the Preparatory Seminary of St. Mary's Perryville, of whom twenty were maintained and educated at the expense of the diocese, five on a perpetual foundation made by the late John Mullanphy, Esq., and the remaining seven at the expense of their parents or other guardians."

In February 1849 the Archbishop wrote: "The Theological Seminary of St. Louis has been transferred to Carondelet, where, under the direction of three competent Professors, eight young men are engaged in the study of Philosophy and Theology—the building occupied as a seminary not admitting a greater number. As it will be necessary, in the course of this year, to transfer to the Seminary at Carondelet a considerable number of those who are at present in the Seminary at Perryville, and who will have completed their preparatory studies, we find ourselves obliged to make additions to the small building which is now occupied as a Seminary. To meet these various expenditures we have no other resource than your cordial and general co-operation, a

---

<sup>7</sup> Pastoral Letter, February 1849, p. 6.

co-operation you can afford without interfering with any local want, or imposing on yourselves anything that can be called burdensome.”<sup>8</sup>

In 1847, the Rev. James Duggan, ordained on May 29th, of that year, had been appointed acting President until the arrival of Father Anthony O'Regan. The new President had been Rector of St. Jarlath's College, Tuam, but had offered his services to Archbishop Kenrick in like capacity. Father Duggan remained with Father O'Regan. The Seminary building was given to the Archbishop by Mrs. Lawless. It was a large new house standing in a spacious garden, near the Convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph.<sup>9</sup>

In 1848 the Society of the Propagation of the Faith remembered the diocese of St. Louis with a remittance of \$8600., and then for the next four years with an average contribution of \$2100. But in 1854 the Archbishop announced the following:

“The aid hitherto supplied to this diocese by the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, will hereafter be no longer afforded. We have received official notice of the fact, which may be attributed to the impression entertained by the Directors of that Association, that St. Louis ought to be able to supply its own wants, as well as to the increasing calls on the funds raised in Europe for the support of Foreign Missions. While we acquiesced in the reasonableness of this determination, we cannot but feel the withdrawal of a resource which, hitherto, has principally enabled us to support the Theological Seminary of this Diocese.”<sup>10</sup>

While the Very Rev. Dr. O'Regan and his assistant professor,” as Canon O'Hanlon informs us, “taught the classes of Logic, Metaphysics and Ethics, of Dogmatic and Moral Theology, as also of Ritual and Liturgy; His Grace, the Archbishop, lectured likewise, on Natural Philosophy and Science, as also, on Sacred Scripture and Canon Law, on those days when he regularly visited Carondelet. . . .”<sup>11</sup>

As to his own connection with the Seminary Canon O'Hanlon writes: “While I was acting in the capacity of assistant at St. John's church, the Archbishop was accustomed twice each week to drive in a buggy from St. Louis to Carondelet; he expressed a desire I should accompany him on those days he drove to the Seminary, to give lectures to the students in English Literature, Rhetoric and Composition. I was delighted to comply. . . . As the post of assistant professor at the Semi-

---

<sup>8</sup> Pastoral Letter, February 1849.

<sup>9</sup> Savage, Sr. M. Lucida, “The Congregation of St. Joseph of Carondelet,” p. 98.

<sup>10</sup> Pastoral Letter of 1852.

<sup>11</sup> “Life and Scenery in Missouri,” p. 227.

nary became vacant, about the commencement of September, 1851, and as I had been applied to by Very Rev. Dr. O'Regan to accept it, at the request of his Grace, the Archbishop: I now left my charge in St. Louis, and went to reside at Carondelet. There I became Prefect of Studies, and in addition to my English classes, I had those of Logic, Metaphysics, and Ethics, as also those of Sacred Ceremonies and Ritual, with Sacred Scripture. Besides I had to discharge the duties of Chaplain for the Sisters of St. Joseph at their convent in the town; celebrate Mass for them each morning in their chapel, as likewise to give catechetical instruction, to the young ladies educated there, once in each week. . .

"Occasionally on Sundays, I went into the city at the Archbishop's request to preach in the Cathedral, but seldom otherwise; for, our city friends were frequent visitors to our Seminary, while our servant and van-driver supplied us with necessities for the house or conveyed messages. At intervals we had visits from some remarkable strangers. I recollect, while there, the distinguished Orestes A. Brownson, a Catholic convert and litterateur, had come to St. Louis where he delivered a course of lectures, and he had been invited with the Archbishop, by Rev. Dr. O'Regan to dine at our Seminary.

Toward the close of 1852 we had accessions to our ecclesiastical staff, in the persons of two very talented and distinguished young deacons, Rev. Patrick A. Feehan and Rev. Patrick John Ryan. They were destined to remain at the Seminary until of age for ordination as priests. They had made excellent studies in their respective colleges of Maynooth and Carlow, so they were now required to take charge of the various classes assigned to each. This work undertaken by them afforded to myself a welcome relief, and a change once more for the city of St. Louis. I continued to discharge my duties at the Seminary, until the 16th of November, 1852, when I returned to my former position, as assistant to the Rev. Patrick O'Brien, still the pastor of St. John's Church."<sup>12</sup>

In 1850 the number of students was twenty-four. Towards the end of 1851, the Archbishop, was seriously thinking of discontinuing his Seminary, but was encouraged by his brother to reject the plan: "The thought of giving up your Seminary does not please me. A Metropolitan See needs such a support to which the other sees may come."<sup>13</sup>

When the see of Chicago, became vacant through the resignation of Bishop Van de Velde, Father Anthony O'Regan, the President of the

<sup>12</sup> O'Hanlon, "Life and Scenery in Missouri," pp. 227-229.

<sup>13</sup> Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence, p. 356.

Seminary, was proposed by the Kenricks as the first choice. "There is nothing against him but a weak voice," wrote Francis Patrick of Baltimore. At the appointment of Father O'Regan as successor to Bishop Van de Velde, July 25th, 1854, the presidency of the Seminary devolved upon Father Feehan.

The Very Reverend Patrick Augustin Feehan was born August 28th, 1829, in County Tipperary. After completing a five years course at the College of Maynooth, the young levite received an invitation from the Archbishop of St. Louis to come to his diocese. Arriving in the city he was sent to the Seminary at Carondelet to prepare for his ordination, which took place on November 1st, 1852. From the time of his entering the ministry Father Feehan taught in the Seminary until July 1853, when he was appointed as assistant to Father O'Brien of St. John's Church, where he received a severe training in missionary life.

A terrible cholera epidemic raged in the city, which called forth all the self-sacrifice of the devoted young priest. Days and nights were spent in administering the sacraments and consoling the poor sufferers; sometimes even preparing them for burial, when kindred and friends deserted them. It was from St. John's Parish that Father Feehan was sent to the Theological Seminary in Carondelet to succeed Rev. Anthony O'Regan. He served as president for three years, taught Moral Theology and Sacred Scripture, and also preached once a month in the Cathedral of St. Louis. Fathers John Hennessy and James Scott served under him as professors. "He was then as now," said Bishop John Hennessy, "kind, gentle, amiable, and a great favorite with students and professors. He was loved by all who knew him well enough to appreciate his rare qualities."<sup>14</sup>

Father Feehan was appointed pastor of St. Michael's Church in St. Louis in July 1858.

Soon after the departure of Father Feehan from Carondelet, the St. Louis Seminary, as conducted by secular priests came to an end. The last Rector was Father John Hennessy, the future Archbishop of Dubuque, and one of the great pulpit orators of his day.

John Hennessy came to St. Louis from Ireland, a student, about 1847. He made his philosophical and theological studies partly with the Lazarists at St. Vincent's Church, and partly in the Diocesan Seminary at Carondelet. He was ordained priest on the 1st of November, 1850. After exercising the functions of the ministry in New Madrid and Kirkwood, in the Diocese of St. Louis, he became Professor of Dogmatic Theology in the Diocesan Seminary, a position which he

---

<sup>14</sup> Kirkfleet, "The Life of Patrick Augustine Feehan," p. 26.

filled for three years. He was then President of the Seminary for one year, when he was commissioned by the Archbishop and the Suffragan Bishops to bear the Decrees of the Second Provincial Council of St. Louis to Rome.

The diocesan Seminary of St. Louis herewith ceased to exist. But the Lazarist Fathers had all these years conducted a College at Cape Girardeau in their spacious building on the river bank, which now had to undergo the change from a secular to a clerical institution. The Rev. Thomas J. Smith was its President at the time, but soon after became the Visitor of the Western Province of the Lazarists.

"In 1857, St. Vincent's College was converted into a seminary for the education of candidates for the priesthood. It was hoped the institution would develop into a great provincial seminary. The Bishops of the St. Louis Province, some of them at least, had promised it their patronage, and the superiors of the Lazarists were, of course, most anxious for the success of the institution. But in the course of time, owing to the fact that the Bishops withdrew their patronage, to a certain extent, owing also to the breaking out of the great Civil War and the bad name of Southeast Missouri for health, the institution did not continue to prosper.

"At one time the number of students was down as low as seventeen."

The great war of the rebellion was casting its shadow before. North and South had their adherents; and even among the chosen ones of God, brother rose in strife against brother.

One of the most distinguished professors the Seminary at Cape Girardeau then had was the Poet-Priest of the South "who, after the war broke out, followed the "Sword of Lee" "through victory and defeat, until the Conquered banner was furled at Appomattox."<sup>15</sup> One of the diocesan students from St. Louis, Christopher Linnenkamp, the future Vicar General of Kansas City, had a misunderstanding with one of the professors about the war, and in consequence left the Seminary for the Salesianum near Milwaukee. From that time on until the reestablishment of the diocesan Seminary under the Lazarist Fathers in 1893, the bulk of the theological students of St. Louis were sent to the Salesianum at St. Francis near Milwaukee, the great foundation of Dr. Joseph Salzmann and Father Michael Heiss. Others attended St. Mary's at Baltimore, and only a small number the St. Vincent's Seminary at Cape Girardeau.

---

<sup>15</sup> Abram J. Ryan, the poet of the "Conquered Banner" and many another beautiful poem. A fine appreciation of the poet may be found in "Good Counsel," for October 1928.

## CHAPTER 4

### NORTHEAST MISSOURI

✓ .

The wonderful growth of the Church in the State of Missouri during the first half of Peter Richard Kenrick's administration is mainly due, under the Providence of God, to the unprecedented influx of Catholics from foreign lands into the new land of glorious promise: but that they were saved for the Church, and organized and consolidated into vigorous parishes is due in a large measure to the missionaries they found on the spot, or that followed them into every nook and corner of the State, especially from Ireland and Germany. These people came in thousands, annually, bringing with them the faith, tried and true, a faith which had been tried in the crucible of suffering and sacrifice; a faith which had become part of them, almost. They were too well accustomed to the sacrifices that had to be made at home for the sake of religion to hesitate when called upon to rally to the support of the same Creed here. They gave gladly, and in giving, cemented anew the bond of love and affection that had held them faithful to their Church and faith, in their fatherland. Those two peoples were signally blessed above all other European immigrants, in that priests of their own race, and tongue accompanied them and zealously ministered to their wants in the land of their adoption.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the beautiful passage from Bishop McQuaid's Sermon before the Fathers of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore: "The first immigrants coming in large numbers were from Ireland. Of all the peoples of Europe they were the best fitted to open the way for religion in a new country. Brave by nature, inured to poverty and hardship, just released from a struggle unto death for the faith, accustomed to the practice of religion in its simplest forms, cherishing dearly their priests whom they had learned to support directly, actively engaged in building humble chapels on the sites of ruined churches and in replacing altars, they were not appalled by the wretchedness of religious equipments and surroundings in their new homes on this side of the Atlantic. The priest was always the priest, no matter where they found him, or from what country he had come; the Mass was always the Mass, no matter where it was offered up. . . ."

Quickly following the Irish came the Germans from all parts of the fatherland. They, too, were a sturdy race, able to hold their own. Many of them had also known persecution for religion's sake; most of them remembered the stories of bloody times which had come down to them among the traditions of their hearths. They were prompt to rival their Irish brethren in building up the Church. At home they had their old parish churches, with the chants and ceremonial, which lend to religion much that is consoling and instructive. The religious traditions and glories of the old land they have sought to emulate in this. Better than all, they have stood fast by the duty of maintaining Christian schools for Christian children. There is much that they can copy from the Irish, and much that the Irish can learn from the Germans. Both have bravely led the way in the Church's march." Memorial Volume, p. 168.

The natural increase, even if all the children had been saved, would have been comparatively small. And then, there is a strong probability, that if the Catholic backbone of these natives had not been strengthened by the generous Catholic spirit of the new arrivals, it might have grown pliant and at last given way to the surrounding influences. To the Catholic immigrants from Ireland and Germany and to their devoted priests, who either accompanied them on the voyage, or followed them soon after their departure, the Catholic Church of the State is indebted for its rapid growth and continued stability.

Peter Richard Kenrick saw at a glance that, as far as the diocese of St. Louis was concerned, the French language was doomed, and that English as the language of the country, and German, as the language of about one half of the Catholics of his diocese, both were in the ascendant. Hence he insisted so earnestly in writing to the absent Rosati: "We want English and German priests." To him the *salus populi* was ever the supreme law. Mere sentiment held a very inferior place in his judgments and acts.

The acquisition of English-speaking and German priests for his diocese was, at the time of which we are writing, one of the main concerns of Bishop Kenrick's life. During the period of time intervening between the beginning of his Coadjutorship and his elevation to the archiepiscopal throne Bishop Kenrick ordained the following gentlemen for his diocese:

On August 25th, 1842.....	Reverend Joseph Kuenster
On August 25th, 1842.....	Reverend Patrick McCabe
On August 25th, 1842.....	Reverend Thomas Cusack
On December 8th, 1842.....	Reverend Michael Carroll
On September 23rd, 1843.....	Reverend James Murphy
On April 25th, 1845.....	Reverend William Wheeler
On May 17th, 1845.....	Reverend Patrick O'Brien
On May 17th, 1845.....	Reverend Bernard Donnelly
On September 21st, 1845.....	Reverend Thomas Scanlan
On September 21st, 1845.....	Reverend Dennis Byrne
On September 21st, 1845.....	Reverend John Higginbotham
On May 29th, 1845.....	Reverend James Duggan
On May 29th, 1845.....	Reverend Patrick Ward
On May 29th, 1845.....	Reverend John O'Hanlon <sup>2</sup>

It will be noticed that this list contains, with one exception, only Irish names. There were at the time no German subjects available for ordination, as Father Melcher's first caravan of theological students, will not be ready for the Order of priesthood, until 1848.

<sup>2</sup> Chancery Records.

The various ordinations of members of the Lazarist and Jesuit communities are also reserved for another chapter. We would, however, add to this list of honor the names of another one of our early Irish priests, who received holy Orders in August 1840, at the hands of Bishop Mathias Loras of Dubuque: the Reverend John Cotter.

As the Fathers Joseph Kuenster, Patrick McCabe and Michael Carroll were, immediately after their ordination, assigned to the mission field of Illinois, which in 1844 became a separate diocese, we will not have much to say about them.

Father Kuenster was appointed pastor of Belleville, and as much became a member of the diocese of Chicago.

Father McCabe was sent to Alton in 1843 and transferred to Prairie du Long in 1843.

Father Carroll succeeded to the pastorship in Alton in 1843.

Of the remaining Fathers, William Wheeler, Patrick O'Brien, and John Higginbotham were appointed to the parishes of St. Patrick, St. John and St. Michael in the city where they immortalized their names by faithful and efficient services, as the sequel will show.

Father John Cotter obtained the ancient Church of Old Mines, with its dependencies.

The Fathers Thomas Cusack and Dennis Byrne were commissioned to establish the widely separated missions of northeast Missouri on a firmer basis; and the Fathers Bernard Donnelly, Thomas Scanlan and Patrick Ward were to do the same service on the western border of the state and in the newly acquired triangle of land called the Platte Purchase.

It had been weighing heavily on Bishop Kenrick's mind, that vast stretches of land in the interior of the state were still terra incognita, in as far as religion was concerned: "The diocese of St. Louis which embraces the entire State of Missouri: and the Indian Territory to the West, is one of the largest in the United States;" he wrote to the Leopoldine Society on December 10th, 1844, "The Catholic population is estimated to be 50,000 souls, of whom at least one third are immigrants from the various parts of Germany. This population is spread unequally over the State. The larger portion dwells in the cities, or at least, in the vicinity of the cities, on the borders of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. Owing to this circumstance and the relatively small number of priests at my disposal, we know but little of the interior of the state; but I know positively, that many Catholics live there dispersed among the non-catholics. In spite of my earnest wish, I was not able until now, to send out missionaries, to explore more accurately this part of my diocese."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "Berichte der Leopoldinen Stiftung," Heft XVIII, p. 61.

Bishop Kenrick's desire was now to be realized, at least in part.

The six Missouri Counties bordering on the Mississippi down from the Iowa state line to the County of St. Charles, Clark, Lewis, Marion, Ralls, Pike and Lincoln, which were first evangelized by that irrepressible Flemish missionary, Peter Paul Lefevere, were, after Father Lefevere's elevation to the episcopal dignity in Detroit, taken over a band of young generous Irish priests, most of them ordained by Bishop Kenrick since 1842. The leader of the movement was Father Thomas Cusack, who immediately after his ordination, took up his abode at the center of Father Lefevere's wide missionary district, St. Paul's on Salt River, Ralls County.

From here he made excursions to Indian Creek in Monroe County, North Santa Fe in Clark County, Palmyra and Hannibal in Marion County, and to the less noted missions. In 1845, however, he moved to the more promising parish of St. Stephen at Indian Creek, a large settlement of Kentucky Catholics that had built a little church and school house. Near Indian Creek there was a German Congregation which Father Cusack was wont to visit, as also the American Congregation at Brush Creek in Ralls County.<sup>4</sup>

On one of Bishop Kenrick's Confirmation trips in the Fall of 1845, Father Cusack saved the Bishop from drowning in one of the swollen rivers, into which the prelate had fallen from his carriage. In 1851, Father Cusack was transferred to Marshall in Saline County, south of the Missouri River, where a pretty frame church crowned the summit of a hill on the state road leading from Paris in Monroe County.<sup>5</sup>

In 1853 Father Cusack became pastor of Jefferson City and had for his Assistant the Rev. Joseph Blaarer. In 1854 he took up missionary work among the Irish laborers on the railroad between Herman and Jefferson City.

His genial ways made him a welcome guest, and a great power for good, among the hardworking, but often rather rollicking Irishmen. Father Cusack died in Mullanphy Hospital, St. Louis, on February 28th, 1887.

Father Cusack's successor at Salt River was Father James Murphy Jr. who assumed charge in 1845. His missions were Louisiana in Pike County and Mudd Settlement in Lincoln, whilst North Santa Fe, Edina, Mudd Settlement in Scotland County, were attended by the two Lazarist Fathers, Thomas Burke and J. De Marchi. But in the

---

<sup>4</sup> O'Hanlon, "Life and Scenery in Missouri," p. 288.

<sup>5</sup> This refers to Arrow Rock, celebrated in romantic song and story, once a famous trading post on the Sante Fe Trail, now the center of a State Park on Highway No. 41, a place of which Father Cusack was pastor in 1850.

following year Father Denis Byrne was intrusted with the missions that surrounded the town of North Santa Fe, in Clark County, near the Iowa border. This place was the starting point of the Santa Fe Trail, the great commercial highway to the Spanish possessions in the Southwest.

There was a church here dedicated to the Apostle of Ireland. The stations depending on it were Edina, in Knox Co., Mudd Settlement in Scotland Co., and the river-towns, Tully and Alexandria.

In 1852 Father Byrne chose for his place of residence the prosperous town of Edina in the heart of Knox County, where he had easy communication by rail in all directions. Here he remained until June 11th, 1856.

In 1848, on September 3rd, Archbishop Peter Richard Kenrick was invested with the pallium in St. John's Church in Philadelphia at the hands of his brother, Francis Patrick. In the same year Father Robert Wheeler was assigned to St. Alphonsus Church, Millwood, with Louisiana and Louisville as outmission. In the following year St. Paul's at Salt River was placed in charge of Father John O'Hanlon. Father Cusack's former mission at Hannibal and Palmyra were now attached to St. Paul's.

Father John O'Hanlon comes before us as one of the most distinguished members of the clergy of St. Louis. His first appointment was St. Patrick's Church at Armagh in Franklin County with which the mission of Downpatrick, now Pacific, was connected. Both Congregations were organized in 1843 by the former missionary in Arkansas, Father Peter Richard Donnelly. The church at Downpatrick was dedicated in honor of St. Bridget. But ere long Father O'Hanlon was called to the Cathedral, as assistant, ostensibly, but mainly to fill the post of editor for the new Catholic paper called the "*News Letter*," for which the Archbishop wrote some of his best historical articles.

It was the time of the Mexican war. As a large military force, mostly Irish and German Catholics, had been assembled at Jefferson Barracks, Father O'Hanlon with two other priests, were sent to give them a mission, at the end of which a very large number of the soldier boys received holy Communion, "with all the external appearances of recollection and devotion."

The St. Louis *News Letter* was not a financial success and, in April 1848, was forced to suspend publication: so its editor was free for other employment. The town of Hannibal, on the southeastern corner of Marion County, had petitioned Archbishop Kenrick for a resident priest. There was no church-building there as yet, but the little band of Catholics in and around the town promised to build one, if their wish were gratified. There were two important congregations within

reach of Hannibal: Palmyra in the same County, and St. Paul's on Salt River to the south. Of these three places St. Paul's, though an inland settlement, was in matter of religion, far superior to the other two places.

Father O'Hanlon chose Hannibal as the more favorable location. As a fair sample of what missionary life in northern Missouri was in the forties of the nineteenth century, a brief review of the many vivid glimpses of his own experiences which the facile pen of Canon O'Hanlon has enshrined in his dear little book '*Life and Scenery in Missouri*,' will not, we hope, be out of place here. For although the author, probably writing from memory, is not always exact in his statements, we have compared those we quote with the official accounts, and found them trustworthy and true to life. Taking leave of St. Louis, Father O'Hanlon boarded the steamer towards evening on May 8th, 1848, and within a few hours, passed the spot where "the Missouri enters the Mississippi with the pride of a conqueror." The night fell on the broad waters. At early dawn Clarksville on the Missouri shore appeared, then Louisiana, a thriving town, handsomely situated and well built town." A little farther north appeared the mouth of Salt River. At last the boat approached the rising town of Hannibal. At the landing the missionary was heartily greeted by Mr. Henry Harrison, an American convert to the Faith, and John J. Dowling a staunch Catholic Irishman. It was at the hospitable home of Mr. Harrison that Father O'Hanlon was entertained during his stay in the northern mission. A room in the house was assigned to him for his own personal use, and in close proximity to the house, a temporary structure of wood was fitted up for a chapel. Speculation was then rife in Hannibal as to a railway projected, and since constructed, between that city and St. Joseph on the Upper Missouri.

Four distinct congregations were now dependent on the new shepherd of souls:

Hannibal, Palmyra, Salt River and Millwood. On the first Sunday of each month Mass was held at Hannibal, on the second Sunday at Palmyra, on the third at St. Paul's, Salt River, and on the fourth at Millwood. At Palmyra there was no church or chapel: services were held in the house of an Irish merchant, a Mr. Conroy. The Salt river congregation still used the old log church that had cost their first pastor, Father Lefevere, so much trouble and disappointment.

The church stood within an enclosure devoted to a cemetery, a true God's acre. But the Congregation owned also a farm of one hundred and sixty acres. Here Father O'Hanlon came every third Sunday to preach, to say Mass and to administer the holy sacraments.

An old Kentucky farmer, Ralph Leake, the same that had gone to St. Louis in 1832 to bring Father Lefevere to his first missionary charge, was Father O'Hanlon's host on these occasions. The fourth Sunday of the month was devoted to visiting the settlement of Maryland Catholics at Millwood, Lincoln County. As this place was about sixty miles due south from Hannibal, it required a two days' ride to reach it. The traveller usually spent the intermediate night at Bowling Green, the county seat of Pike County. There he would say mass for the family of his host, and his friends on the morning of his departure. The round of duties continued during the heats of the summer and the rigorous cold, of the winter, for two long years. On account of the many residents bearing the name of Mudd, the place was long known as Mudd's Settlement. Father O'Hanlon usually resided at the home of Dr. George Mudd. The log-church was dedicated to St. Alphonsus Liguori. All day Saturday after his arrival, the church would be crowded by these fervent Maryland Catholics. The slaves also were taught their catechism and encouraged to receive the sacraments. Night prayer was said in common. What chiefly excited Father O'Hanlon's admiration was the fine spirit of hospitality evinced by the host and hostess, who had a large table spread on each Sunday, not only for the entertainment of their own relatives and friends, but for numbers of other Catholics also, who could hardly be expected to return fasting after Holy Communion, to their distant homes.

Returning from Millwood to Hannibal, Father O'Hanlon regularly stopped for the night at the Hotel in New London, the chief town of Ralls County; and, as it was conducted by good Maryland Catholics, he generally celebrated mass there before leaving for home the next morning.

"The greater part of northern Missouri, except along its chief river courses," Father O'Hanlon tells us, "is composed of prairies, totally devoid of trees, and often ranging over several miles on the upper plateaus between the various streams. For the convenience of building log houses, of rail-fencing and of fire-wood the early settlers in the state usually selected farms in the backwoods, near to the rivers and springs, or at least near the belts of trees bordering on the prairies. The country roads through the woods from farmhouse to farmhouse were easily recognized by the notches on the trees; but the roads through the open prairie were unmarked save by the wheels of the last wagon that passed by. It was, therefore, much more difficult to find your way through the prairies, than through the woodland." Father O'Hanlon recounts such an experience, of riding round and round in the prairie, now following one road, then another, almost dying from thirst, weary and depressed, almost ready to give up the quest, when toward night-

fall, he discovered the housetops of Bowling Green far away, and just peering over the distant line towards the east.<sup>6</sup>

"One of the great spiritual privations," Father O'Hanlon tells us, "to which missionary priests were then subjected in the remote parts of Missouri, was the difficulty of meeting with and enjoying the society of brother priests, whose stations were often far removed from each other."<sup>7</sup> Father O'Hanlon's only accessible neighbor was Father Cusack, the priest, who now had charge of Monroe and some adjoining counties. It was prearranged between the two that on alternate months they should make and receive mutual visits. This involved a ride of some fourteen or fifteen miles. They were accustomed to consult with each other on various matters of private and pastoral concern. But, however pleasant the stay at Hannibal had been, the keen observing eye of Father O'Hanlon soon discovered that St. Paul's Church at Salt River was the true center of his missionary work. So he resolved to take up his abode in the old, long-deserted log house of Father Lefevere's. There he was surrounded by Catholic families: from there he could most conveniently reach the sick members of his flock.

"Oceans of prairie extended on every side at the time I travelled from St. Paul's to Millwood," writes the observant Father; yet on the occasion of each visit, I found farm-fences being extended gradually out upon the open."<sup>8</sup> The timberlands were now all occupied: and the prairie was losing its haunting terrors. The newcomers had to take what was left; and, as it happened, the prairie proved to be the best.

Thus the care for the sick, the instruction of children and converts and the regular monthly visits to his three outmissions took up most of the missionary's time. And these appointments each month had to be kept, even if fits of ague caused by exposure, should make riding very unpleasant. One Sunday morning when starting from St. Paul's for Palmyra, he felt unwell, but still hoped that the attack might pass away. His horse was prepared and he mounted it for the ride of about fifteen miles. As he got out on the prairie, he found himself getting weak, but still rode on and crossed the river at the pond. After another mile through the woods, a cold chill seized him right earnest. He dismounted, led the horse to a thicket a little distance from the road, where after securing the bridle to a branch, he fell down utterly exhausted: The chill was succeeded by a burning fever, leaving him weak and helpless and far away from human habitations. After a

---

<sup>6</sup> "Life and Scenery in Missouri," p. 178 and 179.

<sup>7</sup> "Life and Scenery in Missouri," p. 206 and 207.

<sup>8</sup> "Life and Scenery in Missouri," p. 215.

while he recovered sufficient strength to drag himself to the next house on the road, and in the evening to proceed on his way to Palmyra. The effort was crowned with success, but the penalty was a week in bed with raging fever.<sup>9</sup>

Towards the end of 1850 Father O'Hanlon was recalled from his northern field of labor to serve as assistant to Father Patrick O'Brien in the newly completed Church of St. John the Apostle in the western part of St. Louis.

---

<sup>9</sup> "Life and Scenery in Missouri," p. 219.

## LOSS OF TERRITORY BUT GAIN OF SOULS

The Fifth Provincial Council of Baltimore which was held under Archbishop Eccleston from May 14th to 20th, 1843, was attended by the Bishop of Drasa, Coadjutor of St. Louis with Father John B. Tornatore C.M. as his Theologian. Among other important matters the Fathers of the Council petitioned the Holy Father, that a number of new sees be erected in the United States: namely Chicago with the entire state of Illinois in its jurisdiction, and Little Rock with the state of Arkansas as its diocese. The Holy See speedily acted upon this suggestion. On November 28th, 1843,<sup>1</sup> Pope Gregory XVI erected both dioceses, with William Quarter as Bishop of Chicago and Andrew Byrne as Bishop of Little Rock. Both Prelates were consecrated by Bishop Hughes of New York in the Cathedral of St. Patrick on March 10th, 1844. Thus a large part of the territory subject to St. Louis was withdrawn from its jurisdiction; Milwaukee was also made a diocese at this time, but as the jurisdiction of St. Louis over any part of Wisconsin had ceased with erection of the diocese of Dubuque that change did not affect St. Louis. But as the territory beyond the Rocky Mountains and north of California was at the same time erected into a Vicariate Apostolic with Bishop Francis Norbert Blanchet as its head, the diocese of St. Louis found itself restricted to the state of Missouri with the wilderness west of its boundary to the crest of the Rockies. It was a sufficiently large territory for the most zealous missionary bishop: but beyond the Missouri boundary there was but little Christianity and civilization save a few Indian Missions conducted by the Jesuit Fathers of the St. Louis Province.

But before we turn over to their new Ordinaries the Parishes and Missions established and conducted until then under the jurisdiction of St. Louis, it may be deemed proper to pay each one a brief leave-taking visit, and first in Illinois.

At Alton we meet Father Michael Carroll, Pastor of St. Matthew's church, who also visits Edwardsville twice a month. "The corner stone of a new church was solemnly blessed by the Coadjutor Bishop of this diocese, at Alton, Ill., on Sunday, the 19th of July, a great number of citizens from St. Louis as well as numbers of the inhabitants of Alton were present at the ceremony."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Archbishop of Baltimore was notified by Propaganda of these erections and appointments as early as September 30, 1843. The Bull bears the date of November, 1843.

<sup>2</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," June, 1843.

Belleville is the residence of Father Joseph Kuenster, who has in his charge St. Andrew's and St. Thomas' in St. Clair and Monroe Counties, and St. Libory's. On Easter Monday the first stone of a church to be built in Belleville, Illinois, was solemnly blessed by the Coadjutor Bishop, assisted by the Rev. Mr. Kuenster, Pastor of the district, Rev. M. Cercos, C. M., and several of the alumni of the Theological Seminary of St. Louis.<sup>3</sup>

At Cahokia, the ancient Church of the Holy Family has for its Pastor Father Regis Loisel. The Convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph under Sister Fontbonne, is bearing up bravely under adversities. The Coadjutor Bishop of St. Louis visited French Village of Illinois on Sunday, the 16th Ult., where he administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 36 people.

Galena, Joe Davies Co., with its church of St. Michael and its self-sacrificing priests, Remigins Petiot and C. H. Ostlangenberg, is the center for the missions of Northwestern Illinois, Irish Grove, New Dublin and Freeport. Kaskaskia, the glory of the early Jesuit missions in the Mississippi Valley, and its Convent of the Visitandines, is in temporary charge of Father Irenaeus Saint Cyr, the founder of the Church in Chicago. But he is about to leave for Ste. Genevieve, and the twenty-three sisters of the Convent will ere long be forced to leave their sainted walls to the fury of the greatest flood that visited the Mississippi Valley in historic times, and sad to say, Kaskaskia itself will in the course of a few years find its grave at the bottom of the mighty river. But these things are as yet hidden from all eyes. The distribution of premiums among the young ladies of the Academy attached to the Visitation Convent, Kaskaskia, took place on Wednesday, the 26th ult.; Bishop Odin distributed the prizes. "On Wednesday and Thursday in Easter Week, the same prelate made the annual visitation of the Convent of the Visitation, at Kaskaskia, on which occasion he was accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Heim. The new church of Kaskaskia, 100 feet long, by 50 feet broad— which, when finished will be the largest and most beautiful in Illinois—is almost covered and will be ready for consecration this summer."<sup>4</sup>

The Lasalle Missions, now have two centers: the Church of the Holy Cross at La Salle, with the Lazarists Louis Parodi and Nicholas Stehle as missionaries to Ottawa and Black Partridge; and the chapel at Peoria with J. B. Raho and Montuori visiting Kickapoo, Pekin, Fountain Green and Lacon. The proposed church at Peoria is not yet built.

Prairie du Long in Monroe County has a church dedicated to St. Augustine. Rev. P. McCabe, its pastor attends James Mills, New Design, O'Hara's Settlement and Harrisonville.

<sup>3</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," May 1843.

<sup>4</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," May 1843.

Quincy in Adams County, has for its Pastor Father Hilary Tucker, who also visits Versailles, Mount Sterling and Pittsfield.

The Coadjutor Bishop left St. Louis in the early part of the last week of September to visit the following places agreeably to appointment: St. Augustine, Fulton County, Ill., Sunday, 1st of October; Fountain Green, Hancock County, Sunday 8th of October; to administer the sacrament of Confirmation.<sup>5</sup>

Springfield, Sangamon County, St. John Baptist Church is about to lose its pastor, the Lazarist B. Rollando, in exchange for Father George Hamilton. Shoal Creek, St. Clair County, has the Church of St. Boniface, with Henry Fortman as Pastor; and New Switzerland as outmission. Eleven parishes and a respectable number of missions with thirteen priests is the sum and substance of the dowry, the new Bishop of Chicago will receive from the mother diocese of St. Louis.<sup>6</sup> The Bishop of Little Rock will receive much less.

The City of Little Rock has the church of St. Irenaeus, with the Rev. Richard-Bole as its pastor. St. Mary's, New Gascony, and Pine Bluff are vacant whilst the Post of Arkansas for a short while enjoyed the ministrations of the Rev. Joseph Melcher. But he was recalled, soon to fill the position of Vicar General of the diocese of St. Louis. The Flathead Indian Mission in the Rocky Mountains, though established and supported from St. Louis, is now under the jurisdiction of Bishop Blanchet. Yet, at least a part of the glory surrounding the work of Father De Smet and his companions must fall in reflected splendor upon the diocese of St. Louis.<sup>7</sup>

On the 6th of July, left this city, the Rev. Tiberius Soderini, of the Society of Jesus, for the Indian Missions among the Potawatomi, Ottawas and Chippewas. He was accompanied by two Ladies of the Sacred Heart, who are to join the others of their community, who so successfully conduct the Free School among the Indians.

Something more substantial, however, though, not as memorable, fell to the lot of the diocese this time, in the removal of the Sisters of St. Joseph from Cahokia, and of the Sisters of the Visitation from Kaskaskia to the safer and more promising ground of St. Louis. The first to move from their old habitat on the Illinois side were a colony of the Vistandines. The *Catholic Cabinet* briefly records this event:

"On the same day, 21st of April, 1844, there arrived in this city, from Kaskaskia, Ill., seven Sisters of the Order of the Visitation, for the purpose of opening a Female Academy in this city; Sister Mary Agnes Brent, superior."<sup>8</sup> Further particulars are given in the next issue of the *Catholic Cabinet*:

<sup>5</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," 1843.

<sup>6</sup> Chancery Records.

<sup>7</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," 1844.

<sup>8</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," 1844.

"Towards the close of May, 1844, a new female Academy was opened in this city, on Sixth near Pine. This establishment is conducted by the Religious Sisters of the Order of the Visitation of the B. V. M., founded at Annecy in Savoy, by Francis de Sales, and Joanna Frances Fremiot de Chantal in 1610. This order was solemnly confirmed by Pope Paul V. Its principal objects are the sanctification of its members and the education of youth."<sup>9</sup>

This transfer was effected in the regular order after due preparation, but the other came about in a hurry and with some danger. In explanation we would again quote the *Catholic Cabinet*:

"It has pleased Divine Providence during the last two months, July and August, 1844, to visit our 'Far West' with an inundation unparalleled in western history. L'annee des grandes eaux," of 1795, ever remembered by the old French inhabitants, has been surpassed by the flood of 1844, by which hundreds of families have been driven from their homes, and property to an immense amount has been destroyed.

"Charity, ever alert, has signalized the inhabitants of our city, and all classes of men and denominations of Christians have come forward to alleviate the sufferings and supply the wants of the destitute. Cahokia, Prairie du Rocher, Prairie du Pont, Village Francais and Kaskaskia, places where for centuries the peaceful and gay Frenchmen and the humble Indian found their happiness to be seated under the shadow of the cross-places renowned in Spanish, French, English and American histories, have all been submerged. Many of their inhabitants abandoning their homes, stock and future expectations to the fury of the waters, found ready shelter with their friends in this city and elsewhere. Their churches, especially that of Cahokia, have suffered materially. The "Ladies of the Visitation" of Kaskaskia have been obliged to abandon their convent and take refuge in our hospitable city, where they have determined to remain."<sup>10</sup>

Two weeks after the departure of Mother Agnes Brent and her associates, the waters of the Kaskaskia and the Mississippi Rivers began to flood the tongue of land on which the town of Kaskaskia was built. Higher and higher they rose covering the fields and meadows, and isolating the scattered homes amid the half submerged trees. As the surface of Kaskaskia plain lay on a stratum of quicksand, it was feared that the entire town might be carried away by the mighty flood. The Sister's Convent showed marks of impending collapse. Amadei Menard,

---

<sup>9</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," vol. II, 3, 1844.

<sup>10</sup> "Catholic Cabinet," vol. II, 4, 1844. This was not the entire community of the Visitandines, but only a colony of six sisters under Mother Agnes Brent Bishop Kenrick had invited to St. Louis. They were kindly received by the Sisters of Charity in their Hospital. Within a fortnight they were established in a rented house on Sixth street.

in a flatboat, conveyed a number of the Sisters to his own dwelling on the bluffs, east of the river. For those that remained in the Convent Father Saint Cyr, their chaplain, said mass in the chapel. Then the work of packing up began. The brick floor of the kitchen sank whenever they stepped on it: one part of the refectory was already submerged. Carrying all their belongings to the second floor, all the Sisters left the doomed Convent and were rowed to the bluffs. Here in Mr. Menard's mansion the homeless Sisters and their pupils were crowded together, awaiting the arrival of help. And help eventually came.<sup>11</sup>

Bishop Kenrick was on his way to Kaskaskia in company with the newly consecrated Bishop of Chicago, William Quarter. Father John Timon and Father de Saint Pelais, both of whom were destined to become bishops, were also with him. They had no knowledge as yet of what had happened at Kaskaskia. But on drawing nearer they found a foaming sea as far as the eye could carry, and in it, like tiny islands, lay the roofs of the homes of what had been Kaskaskia. Father Heim had gone in quest of a boat, to carry the Sisters to St. Louis. But no Captain was willing to turn his boat into the Kaskaskia River. Father Timon had better success. He hailed a steamer coming up from the South and induced him to undertake the dangerous work. On Wednesday morning, June 26th, 1844, the steamer arrived at the Menard Mansion on the Kaskaskia River. All the party, Bishop, priests, sisters and pupils got on board, and the steamer nosed its way between roofs of houses and swaying tree tops to the deserted convent. Taking on board whatever could be taken pianos, harps, stoves, desks, benches and bedding, and by one o'clock on Wednesday the Sisters, bidding adieu to their Convent and to Kaskaskia, started for St. Louis, where they arrived the next morning at dawn.<sup>12</sup> They were taken to the house on Sixth Street where Sister Agnes Brent had opened the Academy for Young Ladies. This house was too small for the enlarged community, but the great benefactor of the Church Mrs. Biddle offered the newcomers her own house on Fifth Street for a Convent and school, reserving for herself only one room of the capacious building. The superior of the Broadway Convent was Sister Isabella King, whilst Sister Agnes Brent remained in charge of the convent on Sixth Street. In July 1846 the two communities of the Visitandines were reunited under Mother Agnes as Superior, taking possession of the place on Ninth Street offered them by the Archbishop.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Troesch, Helen, "The First Convent in Illinois," in "Illinois Catholic Historical Review," vol. I, p. 368. The account was written by an eyewitness, Sister M. Josephine Barber.

<sup>12</sup> Shipman, Paul R., "Establishment of the Visitation in the West," "American Catholic Quarterly," January, 1886.

Thus Bishop Quarter of Chicago was deprived by a sudden stroke of adverse fortune of the first Sisterhood ever established in the soil of Illinois. But this was not his only loss. The raging flood that forced the Visitandines to leave Kaskaskia, in like manner forced the Sisters of St. Joseph to leave their lonely convent in Cahokia. Mother Febronic Fontbonne and her little community sought refuge in the second story of the convent. In the meantime the Mayor of St. Louis, Bernard Pratte, sent a number of boats to the rescue. The entire community were brought to Carondelet; all had suffered greatly from exposure. Though the waters gradually subsided, health condition in Cahokia remained unfavorable to their return. Father Regis Loisel, the pastor of Cahokia, visited it, and paid for his over-confidence by a lingering disease that ended his life on May 10th, 1845.

What was Bishop Quarter's loss was Bishop Kenrick's gain. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, thus increased in membership, assumed charge of three institutions in St. Louis. Two of these, St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum and St. Vincent's Parochial School, were permanent; the third was short-lived, yet produced some excellent results. It was the School for Catholic Colored girls established by Father Augustin Paris on Third and Poplar Sts. (Feb. 5th, 1845) children of Free Negroes were the pupils, the slave-children were instructed in religion after school hours and on Sundays. Bishop Kenrick took great interest in the school. But owing to a strong prejudice of the slave-holding population who feared serious consequences from an educated Negro element, the school had to be discontinued.<sup>13</sup> The only Sisterhood established in the state of Arkansas as a part of the diocese of St. Louis was that of the Loretines. The Sisters were invited to St. Mary's near Pine Bluff where, in 1838, a small strip of land with a few log and frame buildings were given them. The Superior was Sister Agnes Hart. St. Joseph's, Little Rock was established from this house in 1841, with Sister Alodia Vessels as Superior. In August 1842, the Sisters of St. Mary's were removed to St. Ambrose, Post Arkansas, and recalled to Loretto in 1845.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Savage, Sr. Lucida, "The Congregation of St. Joseph of Carondelet," pp. 62 & 63.

<sup>14</sup> Maes, "Life of Rev. Charles Nerinckx," p. 573.











Part I, with all

25 / 518

1-10



BX

1417

S2

R6

**Rothensteiner, John Ernest, 1860-1936.**

History of the archdiocese of St. Louis in its various stages of development from A. D. 1673 to A. D. 1928, by Rev. John Rothensteiner. St. Louis, Mo. (Printed by Blackwell Wiley co., 1928.

2 v. fronts., plates, ports., maps, facsim. 24 cm.

Bibliography : vol. II, p. 769-790.

1. St. Louis (Archdiocese)—Hist. 2. Catholic church in Missouri.

**333429**

Library of Congress

CCSC/mr

29-5191

HX1417.S2R6

(a50f1)

